THE

TEACHERS' COMMENTARY

ON THE

GOSPEL ACCORDING TO ST. MATTHEW

BY

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SUGGESTIVE ILLUSTRATIONS ON THE NEW
TESTAMENT, ETC.

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PREFACE

COMMENTARIES on the Gospels are already so many and so good, that it seems almost like presumption for me to add another to this great and growing and goodly company. But there is reason to believe that one part of the field is not completely occupied. New light, new methods, and new ways of presenting the truth have been developed since many of the best popular commentaries have been issued; and the tendency of the later scholarly ones has been in a different direction and toward different aims from the one here proposed.

The title, THE TEACHERS' COMMENTARY, indicates in some measure the scope and purpose of the present volume, and the persons for whom it is designed.

The aim is to present in the light of the latest and best scholarship, and of the best modern methods, the Life, the Character, the Teachings, and the Mission of Jesus the Christ, as witnessed and recorded by the Apostle Matthew, so clearly, so simply, so practically, so suggestively, that people of even ordinary intelligence and culture may possess the best there is on the subject in the most attractive and helpful form; and that teachers, leaders of prayer-meetings, pastors, heads of families, and Christian workers of all denominations may be aided in accomplishing their work.

No one can know better than myself how imperfectly this will be done, or how very far this volume will come short of this ideal. But this purpose is kept steadily in view; and an experience of more than a quarter of a century with commentaries of all kinds, and the success of the *Select Notes on the International Lessons*, which have the same general purpose in view, and of which more than a million copies have been sold, give a reason for the hope that this purpose may be accomplished in some useful degree.

The limitations of the object in view, and the limitations of space so that the volume may not be too expensive for the general public for which it is intended, require the exclusion of a large amount of certain kinds of critical matter, and of the discussion of subjects and questions of the deepest interest and greatest value to scholars. But they are treated in other works by the best scholars far better than would be possible here, even were there space enough; and we can only refer interested readers to their works.

On the other hand, many things are included within the scope of our purpose. Every kind of help is included that can throw light upon the text, — from scholarship, from literature, from history, from geography and travel, from new points of view, from pictures, from the original Greek.

There will be practical applications, suggestive hints, statements of principles.

The text will be the combined Authorized and Revised.

The References are the new ones lately prepared with great care and expense under the auspices of the University Presses, for the Revised Version.

There are maps, charts, and pictures so far as they can explain any obscure references to oriental customs; the time, place, and circumstances are noted in connection with events.

The chronological order is in the main that of Andrews' *Life of Christ*, because some order must be followed, and that, on the whole, is the most satisfactory; moreover, it is the order of development, rather than exact dates, that is important.

There are frequent quotations (1) when it is desirable to give some well-known authority for a statement; and (2) when anything is said peculiarly well by another author, giving variety and flavor beyond what is possible to any one writer.

In these ways it is hoped to promote a new and living interest in the Gospel; to see Jesus more clearly as he lived among men "full of grace and truth," as presented to us by those who beheld his glory "as of the only begotten of the Father," in order that all may love and trust him, and may abide with him in his heavenly kingdom.

AUBURNDALE, MASS., January 1, 1901.

MATTHEW

Name. Matthew had two names, — Matthew, "The gift of God," the same as the Greek name Theodore, or possibly from the Aramaic Mattay, "Manly;" and Levi, a common Jewish name from one of the patriarchs. Either he had originally the two names, as was common among the Jews, or to his name Levi there was added, when he became a Christian, the name Matthew, as Saul became Paul, and Simon was named Peter. He is always called Matthew in the lists of the Apostles.

Descent. His father's name is given as Alphæus (Mark 2 : 14). He was a "Hebrew of the Hebrews," versed in the history and prophecy of his race, as his writings show.

His Home was at Capernaum, on the northwest shore of the Sea of Galilee.

His Business was that of a publican, or collector of customs, at Capernaum, which is on one of the great caravan-routes from the East to Egypt. Apparently he conducted his business, unpopular as it was, and full of temptations, in an honest upright manner; for there is no suggestion, as in the case of Zaccheus, of restoring dishonest gains (Luke 19 : 8); yet he seems to have been so successful in business as to have amassed some degree of wealth.

Two advantages for the furtherance of his apostolic work came from his being a business man. (1) He was enabled to reach the large class of publicans and outcasts, and to bring them within the immediate circle of the teachings of Jesus. One of the first things he did after his call was to make a great feast, where Jesus and his disciples were invited to meet his former business associates. (2) We have the Gospel according to Matthew from his hand, written from a religious business man's point of view. It is a plain, orderly statement, in business-like fashion, of an eye-witness, an actual spectator; not the chronological order of the practised historian, nor the brilliant picture of the literary artist; but the record of facts as they most deeply impressed and moved a plain but acute man of business. As a public collector of taxes he would be accustomed to keeping accurate records.

His Call. How much previous preparation Matthew had received is not recorded. But he lived in the city where Jesus made his home, the centre of his Galilean ministry, and where many of his miracles were wrought, and where every one was discussing the claims and the teaching of the new prophet. Matthew must have known a great deal about Jesus, and come to some conclusions concerning him, before that eventful occasion when passing near the custom-house where Matthew was sitting, Jesus said to him, "Follow me" (Matt. 9 : 9), and he arose and followed him, and henceforth became one of the Twelve.

His Life Work. Apparently Matthew held an humble position among the apostles, and his influence was exerted in quiet, unobtrusive ways. After his call, and the feast at his house, he is not mentioned once in the Gospels or the Acts, except in the lists of the Twelve. He names himself as the Publican, though none of the others attach this designation to his name. He is not among the favored three. No incident is connected with his name. No word or question of his to Jesus is recorded.

But he wrote one of the four Gospels. He has been a helper to Christians all through the succeeding ages. His name and work are familiar wherever the Gospel is preached. Few persons in history, few even of the Twelve, have had an influence so great, a career so widely known, a usefulness so extended, as this silent, retiring business man, "swift to hear and slow to speak," who has left no record of his own life, nor did anything that was thought worthy

of notice by other writers "from the day that he rose from the publican's desk to follow Jesus." His personality was lost in his message. "Scarcely one famous picture has taught the lesson of his call." "None of the great churches have been called by his name." "Among the Evangelists, however, the publican stands first in order, and opens the banner of salvation, even as Mary Magdalene . . . was the first to bring tidings of the resurrection."[1]

Little is known of his later life, except from fragmentary notices of early writers and some early traditions. It is supposed that he remained in Palestine longer than most of the Twelve. Some say for fifteen years. Then he went to foreign lands, among which have been named Egypt, Parthia, Ethiopia, and Macedonia. Eusebius says that St. Matthew, when about to depart for his mission field, "left as a memorial to his Palestinian converts the story of the New Covenant committed to writing in their own tongue, the Aramaic or Hebrew dialect which they used. This parting gift of the Evangelist was the origin of the written Gospels."[2] It is unknown where or when or how he died. "The traditions of the Greek Church and the pictures of the Greek artists represent him dying peacefully. But the Western Church has placed Matthew on the list of martyrs, and in the works of Italian painters he is portrayed perishing by the executioner's sword." But of him it can be said as of Mary of Bethany, "Wherever this Gospel shall be preached in the whole world, that also which this woman hath done shall be spoken of for a memorial of her."

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO MATTHEW

AUTHOR. That Matthew was the author of this Gospel is the unanimous tradition of the ancient church, which there is no strong reason for doubting.

THE DATE. Probably between A. D. 60 and 70. Prof. Sanday in his article in the new "Hastings' Dictionary of the Bible" expresses the conviction, which he believes that continued investigation will confirm, that the great mass of the Synoptic Gospels had assumed its permanent shape not later than the decade 60 to 70 A. D.

THE PLACE OF WRITING is unknown, but the probability is that it was written in Palestine, and very likely at Jerusalem.

THE LANGUAGE. Matthew wrote this Gospel in Greek, although many contend that he also wrote one in Hebrew, or Aramaic, the Hebrew dialect then commonly spoken in Palestine. The question is one in which critical scholars studying the sources of the Gospels have a deep interest.

THE SOURCES. It is evident that the story of the life and teachings of Christ by the different apostles and others who heard him, must have been familiar to the church long before any of the present Gospels were written. It was the common subject of preaching. It is also true (Luke 1 : 1) that more or less of this was committed to writing. But which of our Gospels was first written, and how much one depends upon the other, or all upon some written sources common to all, is still under discussion.

But Matthew reports largely what came under his own observation. As a business man accustomed to keep records, he may have kept written notes of what he saw and heard ; and his very style implies this. "It is not the contemporary and the eye-witness, but the historian of a succeeding age, who takes the keenest interest in minute detail and records with faithful accuracy the less prominent circumstances of a great event. It is the Herodotus or the Macaulay — the historian, the 'questioner' — who gathers from every source materials for a minute and brilliant picture, rather than the actual spectator, who is often too deeply absorbed

[1] Lange. [2] Rev. A. Carr in *Cambridge Bible.*

by the one point of supreme interest in a scene to notice the looks and acts of other bystanders, or so impressed by the speaker's glowing thoughts, as to deem them alone worthy of record." [1] Hence it is that Matthew records but little of the life of Jesus before his call, omitting the whole of his first year, the Judean Ministry, and touching lightly on the first months of the Galilean ministry.

Characteristics. Three characteristics are especially noteworthy.

1. The fact referred to above that Matthew writes as an eye-witness, from the standpoint of an intelligent but plain man of business.

2. The arrangement of his book is topical rather than chronological. Only the general outline of the first part is given in the exact order of events. The latter part follows more nearly the order in which the events took place, but the selection is still in the form of grouping the teachings and the miracles. Thus he emphasizes and illustrates the instructions and truths about the kingdom of heaven, and shows their connection and meaning in the life and work of Christ. This method is especially apparent in the collection of teachings called the Sermon on the Mount, occupying three chapters; and the group of miracles in chapters eight and nine, proving the teacher's authority, and illustrating his teachings and his mission; and in chapter ten, embodying his personal instructions to his disciples.

3. The other characteristic is the relation of this Gospel to the Old Testament scriptures. It is "almost a manual of Old Testament prophecy." It abounds in Old Testament references. The Old Testament is always before his eyes as he writes. This Gospel takes the life of Jesus as it was lived on earth, and his character as it actually appeared, and places them alongside the life and character of the Messiah as sketched in the prophets, that the two may appear in their marvelous unity and in their perfect identity. Thus the kingdom of heaven foretold in the prophets is unfolded in its new meaning and development, a visible, spiritual kingdom of righteousness "on earth as it is in heaven."

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[1] Rev. A. Carr, M. A. Intro. to *Cambridge Bible.*

ANALYSIS OF THE GOSPEL.

SECTION I.

THE HUMAN ANCESTRY OF JESUS.

CHAPTER 1: 1–17.

The Three Periods:
1. From Abraham to David.
2. From David to the Exile.
3. From the Exile to Jesus the Christ.

Notes on the Genealogies.
Practical Suggestions.

SECTION II.

THE BIRTH OF JESUS. HIS DIVINE ORIGIN.

CHAPTER 1: 18–25.

TIME. Spring, B. C. 5 to Jan., B. C. 4. PLACE. Nazareth and Bethlehem.

Mary the Mother of Jesus.
The Angelic Message to Joseph.
The Name, Jesus.
The Prophecy of Immanuel.
The Birth of Jesus.
Who he was before he came into the world.

SECTION III.

THE CHILDHOOD AND YOUTH OF JESUS.

CHAPTER 2: 1–23.

TIME. Dec. 25, B. C. 5 to A. D. 26. PLACE. Bethlehem and Nazareth.

1. Eight Lines of Preparation of the World for the Coming of the Messiah.
2. The Date of the Birth of Jesus.
3. The Visit of the Wise Men.
4. The Star in the East.
5. The Flight into Egypt.
6. The Massacre of the Innocents.
7. The Return to Nazareth.
8. The Home Training of Jesus for his Great Work.

SECTION IV.

JOHN THE BAPTIST AND HIS MISSION.

CHAPTER 3: 1–12.

TIME. Summer of A. D. 26 to March A. D. 28. PLACE. Wilderness of Judea.

1. The Hidden Years of John.
2. Preaching in the Wilderness.
3. How he prepared the Way for Jesus.

SECTION V.

PREPARATIONS OF JESUS FOR ENTERING UPON HIS PUBLIC MINISTRY.

CHAPTER 3: 1–13; 4: 1–11.

TIME. January and February, A. D. 27. PLACE. Bethabara and the Wilderness of Judea.

1. By the Ministry of John.
2. By Baptism.

3. By the Coming upon him of the Holy Spirit.
4. By the Testimony of a Voice from his Heavenly Father.
5. By the Temptation in the Wilderness.
   (1) First Temptation.
   (2) Second Temptation.
   (3) Third Temptation.
   (4) Victory over Temptation.

SECTION VI.

A GENERAL VIEW OF THE GALILEAN MINISTRY.

CHAPTER 4: 12-24.

TIME. Spring of A. D. 28. PLACE. Capernaum and Galilee.

1. A Beautiful Vision of the Prophet.
2. A Beautiful Picture of its Fulfilment.
   (1) Jesus changes his field of labor to Galilee.
   (2) The prophecy of better times.
   (3) The preaching that helped to fulfil it.
   (4) The summons of others to aid in its fulfilment.
   (5) A general view of Jesus' ministry.

SECTION VII.

THE PRINCIPLES OF THE KINGDOM OF HEAVEN.

CHAPTER 5: 1-7: 29.

TIME. Midsummer, A. D. 28. PLACE. A mountain near the Sea of Galilee.

1. The Seven Beatitudes: The Inner Spirit.
2. The Eighth Beatitude: The Spirit Tested.
3. The Spirit Expressed.
4. The Truth made clear by the Old, and by Contrast with False Interpretation of the Old.
5. Applications to the Religious Life
   A Lesson on Almsgiving.
   A Lesson on Prayer.
   A Lesson on Forgiveness.
   A Lesson on Fasting.
6. Applications to the Aim and Purpose of Life.
   The supreme choice (1) of Treasure.
   (2) of a Master.
   Helps toward a right choice.
7. Guards against Insidious Dangers to the Religious Spirit.
   Judging Others.
   Motes and Beams.
   Pearls and Swine.
8. The Means of Obtaining and Sustaining the New Life.
9. The Golden Rule. The Sum of the Sermon.
10. An Exhortation to enter the New Life.
11. Tests, for Ourselves and Others.

SECTION VIII.

A GROUP OF MIRACLES PROVING JESUS' AUTHORITY AND ILLUSTRATING HIS TEACHINGS.

CHAPTER 8: 1-9: 38.

TIME. Spring, Summer, and Autumn, A. D. 28. PLACE. Galilee.

1. A Case of Leprosy.
2. A Case of Palsy; the Centurion's Servant.
3. A Case of Fever; Peter's Wife's Mother.
4. A Summary of Miraculous Works; Great Multitudes.
5. Stilling the Tempest, and Associated Incidents.

6. Evil Spirits cast out ; the Gadarene Demoniac.
7. A Case of Paralysis ; the Man borne of Four.
8. The Call of Matthew.
9. The Banquet and Reception at Matthew's House.
10. Restoration of the Dead ; Jairus' Daughter.
11. The Issue of Blood.
12. Blindness cured ; Two Blind Men.
13. Demons cast out ; the Dumb Possessed.
14. Many Diseases cured.
15. A Call for more Laborers.

SECTION IX.

A NEW STAGE IN THE DEVELOPMENT OF THE KINGDOM ; A HIGHER COURSE OF INSTRUCTION IN THE SCHOOL OF CHRIST.

CHAPTER 10 : 1–42.

TIME. Winter of A. D. 29. PLACE. Galilee.

1. The Twelve Apostles.
2. Their Field of Work.
3. Their Work in this Field.
4. How to deal with Opposers.
5. Encouragements with Instruction from Seven Points of View.

SECTION X.

JESUS AND JOHN THE BAPTIST.

CHAPTER 11 : 1–19.

TIME. Summer of A. D. 28. PLACE. Somewhere in Galilee.

1. The Two Scenes : Jesus in Galilee, John in Macherus.
2. The Discouraged Prophet, An Eclipse of Faith.
3. How Jesus cured Discouragement and Doubt.
4. Discourse of Jesus concerning John.

SECTION XI.

WARNINGS AND INVITATIONS.

CHAPTER 11 : 20–30.

TIME. Dec., A. D. 29. PLACE. Somewhere in Perea.

SECTION XII.

FIVE SEPARATE ATTACKS ; MARKING A DISTINCT EPOCH IN THE WORK OF CHRIST.

CHAPTER 12 : 1–50.

TIME. Autumn, A. D. 28 to Dec. A. D. 29. PLACE. Galilee and Perea.

First Attack : Through Christ's Method of Keeping the Sabbath.
Second Attack : A Council of the Rulers to Destroy Jesus.
Third Attack : False Accusations, on Account of the Healing of a Demoniac.
Fourth Attack : The Demand for a Sign.
Fifth Attack : Interference from his own Family.

SECTION XIII.

A NEW METHOD OF TEACHING : BY PARABLES.

CHAPTER 13 : 1–58.

TIME. Autumn, A. D. 28. PLACE. Beside the Sea of Galilee.

Seven Parables illustrating various aspects of the Kingdom of Heaven.

1. The Sowers.
2. The Tares.
3. The Mustard Seed.

4. The Leaven.
5. The Hid Treasure.
6. The Pearl of Great Price.
7. The Drag-Net.

SECTION XIV.

VARIOUS ASPECTS OF THE GALILEAN MINISTRY.

CHAPTER 14 : 1–16 : 12.

TIME. Spring and Summer, A. D. 29. PLACE. Galilee.

1. The Martyrdom of John the Baptist.
2. Feeding the Five Thousand.
3. The Storm at Sea. Peter's Experience and Lesson in Faith.
4. Healing Great Numbers at Gennesaret.
5. Some False Traditions of the Elders exposed.
6. The Syrophenician Woman's Faith.
7. Multitudes healed.
8. Feeding of the Four Thousand.
9. The Signs of the Times.
10. The Leaven of the Pharisees.

SECTION XV.

REVELATION OF THE SUFFERING MESSIAH.

A distinct stage of development in the teaching of Jesus, and the training of the Twelve.

CHAPTER 16 : 13–28.

TIME. Autumn A. D. 29. PLACE. Cæsarea Philippi.

1. The Settled Faith of the Disciples that Jesus was the Messiah.
2. The Rock and the Keys.
3. A Further Revelation, — that the Messiah must die and be raised again.
4. The General Principle involved.

SECTION XVI.

THE TRANSFIGURATION.

CHAPTER 17 : 1–13.

TIME. Autumn, A. D. 29. PLACE. On Mount Hermon.

1. The Prayer-meeting on the Mountain.
2. Jesus Transfigured.
3. The Conference of the Three Glorified Ones.
4. The Three Witnesses.
5. The Divine Testimony to Jesus.
6. Lessons from the Transfiguration.

SECTION XVII.

FINAL INSTRUCTIONS OF THE GALILEAN MINISTRY.

CHAPTERS 17 : 14 — 18 : 35.

TIME. Autumn, A. D. 29. PLACE. The foot of Mount Hermon, and in Galilee.

1. The Lunatic Child.
2. Lesson on Faith.
3. The Suffering Messiah (repeated).
4. The Tribute Money.
5. Some Great Truths a Little Child can teach us.
   (1) Greatness in the Kingdom of Heaven.
   (2) Concerning Offences.
   (3) Despising the Little Ones.
6. Saving the Lost.
   Illustrated by the Parable of the Lost Sheep.

7. The Treatment of those who injure us.
8. The Power of United Prayer.
9. Forgiving Others, seventy times seven times.
   Illustrated by the Parable of The Two Debtors.

SECTION XVIII.

THE PEREAN MINISTRY.

Recorded chiefly by Luke, chapters 10 to 19, and Matthew, chapters 19, 20, and Mark, chapter 10.

CHAPTER 19: 1–20.

TIME. Nov. A. D. 29 to the last of April A. D. 30. PLACE. Perea.

1. Jesus leaves Galilee. End of the Galilean Ministry.
2. Questions concerning Divorce and the Family.
3. Jesus blessing Little Children.
4. A Young Ruler seeking Eternal Life.
5. Parable of the Laborers in the Vineyard.
6. Christ again foretells his Crucifixion and Resurrection.
7. The Ambition of James and John.
8. Two Blind Men receive Sight at Jericho.

SECTION XIX.

THE LAST DAYS OF JESUS' PUBLIC LIFE.

CHAPTERS 21: 1–23: 39.

TIME. APRIL, A. D. 30. PLACE. Bethany and Jerusalem.

Friday, March 3. The Arrival at Bethany from Jericho.

Saturday, April 1. The Supper at Bethany, and Anointing by Mary.

Sunday, Apri 12. 1. The Triumphal Entry.
2. Return to Bethany.

Monday, April 3. 1. Cursing the Barren Fig Tree on the Way to the City.
2. The Second Cleansing of the Temple.
3. Healing the Sick.
4. Educating the People in Religion.
5. The Children's Hosannas.

Tuesday, April 4. The last day of the Public Teaching of Jesus.

1. Lesson from the Barren Fig-Tree.
2. The Authority of Jesus questioned.
3. Parable of the Two Sons.
4. Parable of the Vineyard.
5. The Rejected Stone.
6. Parable of the Marriage of the King's Son.

Then followed a series of entangling questions through which it was sought to entrap Jesus into saying something on account of which they could bring charges against him.

7. Question by the Herodians concerning Paying Tribute.
8. Question by the Sadducees concerning the Resurrection.
9. Question by a Scribe of the Pharisees concerning the Greatest Commandment.
10. Jesus, having answered wisely, finally silences them by a question in return concerning the expected Messiah.
11. Jesus warns the People against the Example of the Scribes and Pharisees.
12. A Terrible Indictment of the Jewish Leaders.

SECTION XX.

DISCOURSE CONCERNING THE DESTRUCTION OF JERUSALEM, AND THE END OF THE WORLD.

CHAPTER 24: 1–51.

PLACE. On the Mount of Olives. TIME. Tuesday, April 4, A. D. 30.

SECTION XXI.

THREE PARABLES CONCERNING PREPARATION FOR THE LAST DAYS.

CHAPTER 25: 1–46.

PLACE. On Mount Olivet. TIME. Tuesday, April 4, A. D. 30.

1. The Ten Virgins.
2. The Talents.
3. The Judgment.

SECTION XXII.

LAST TWO DAYS OF JESUS WITH HIS DISCIPLES.

CHAPTER 26: 1–46.

TIME. Tuesday to Thursday, April 4–6, A. D. 30.

1. Conspiracy of the Rulers.
2. Supper at Bethany.
3. Conspiracy of Judas with the Rulers.
4. The Last Supper.
5. Farewell Discourses.
6. In the Garden of Gethsemane.

SECTION XXIII.

THE TRIAL OF JESUS.

CHAPTERS 26: 47–27: 26.

TIME. Friday morning, April 7, A. D. 30.

1. The Betrayal and Arrest.
2. The Trial before the Jewish Authorities.
   - Before Annas.
   - Before Caiaphas and the Sanhedrim.
   - The Charge.
   - The Sentence.
   - Mockeries.
   - The Denials of Peter.
   - The Repentance of Peter.
   - The Legalized Sentence by the Sanhedrim.
   - The End of Judas.
3. The Trial before Pilate.
   - First Trial before Pilate.
   - The Trial before Herod.
   - The Second Trial before Pilate.
   - Six Expedients of Pilate.
   - The Verdict of Innocence.
   - Delivered to be Crucified.

SECTION XXIV.

THE CRUCIFIXION.

CHAPTER 27: 31–66.

TIME. Friday, April 7, A. D. 30.

1. On the Way to the Cross.
2. The Crucifixion.
3. Scenes around the Cross.
4. The Death of Jesus the Christ.
5. Accompanying Signs.
6. The Burial.

SECTION XXV.

THE RESURRECTION.

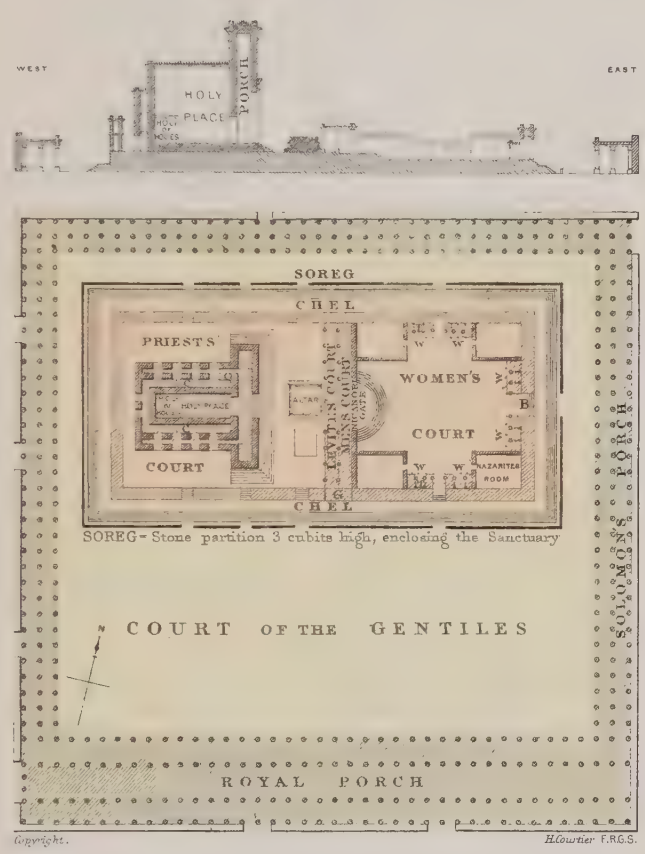
CHAPTER 28: 1-20.

TIME. April, A. D. 30.

1. The Resurrection of Jesus.
2. The Eleven Appearances.
3. The Great Commission.
4. The Ascension.
5. The Ever-living Saviour.

THE HOLY LAND
IN THE TIME OF OUR SAVIOUR
English Miles
0 5 10 20
Tyre
Ladder of Tyrus
Ptolemais
Akka
Haifa
Dora
Cæsarea
Apollonia
Kefa Saba
Antipatris
Joppa
Lydda
Jamnia
Accaron
Nicopolis
Azotus
Asculon
Marisa
Beit Jibrin
Hebron
Adora
Beersheba
Wady es Seba
MEDITERRANEAN
Sharon
Sephelah
GALILEE
Sogane
Jotapata
Magdala
Tiberias
Sepphoris
Cana
Nazareth
Simonias
Nain
Armageddon
Esdraelon
Scythopolis
Jenin
Dothaim
SAMARIA
Geba
Samaria
Ænon
Sychem
Sychar
Salim
Jacobs Well
Gitta
Gerizim
Archelais
Corea
Phasaelis
Adida
Gophna
Ephraim
Bethel
Ramah
Jericho
Emmaus
JERUSALEM
Bethphage
Bethany
Brook Kidron
Bethlehem
Herodium
JUDÆA
Hebron
Adora
Jutah
Engaddi
Masada
The Wilderness
Lake Asphaltitis
Dead Sea
1297 ft. below the Mediterranean
The Arabah or Plain of Jordan
Caesarea Philippi
Dan
Daphne
L. Phiala
Tell esh Sheikhah
el Kunearah
L. Semechonitis
Gischala
Chorazin
Capernaum
Lake of Gennesaret
Sea of Galilee
682
Emmaus
Sennabris
Tarichæ
Mt. Tabor
Bethsaida
Julias
Gergesa
Gamala
Aphek
Hippos
Gadara
Abila
Capitolias
Bethabara
Decapolis
Kh. Fahil
Gerasa
Amathus
Philadelphia
Livias
Esebon
Heshbon
Cathrhoe
Machærus
JERUSALEM
English Furlongs
0 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8
3rd Wall
Calvary
2nd Wall
Millo
Temple
Mt. of Olives
Geth Sertane
Citadel
1st Wall
Zion
Ophel
Enrogel
Zoheleth
Pool of Siloam
Kidron
Akeldama
Joab's Well
M. Mt. Moriah
P. Pool of Hezekiah
K. Kings Gardens
H. Courtier, F.R.G.S.

THE TEMPLE REBUILT BY HEROD



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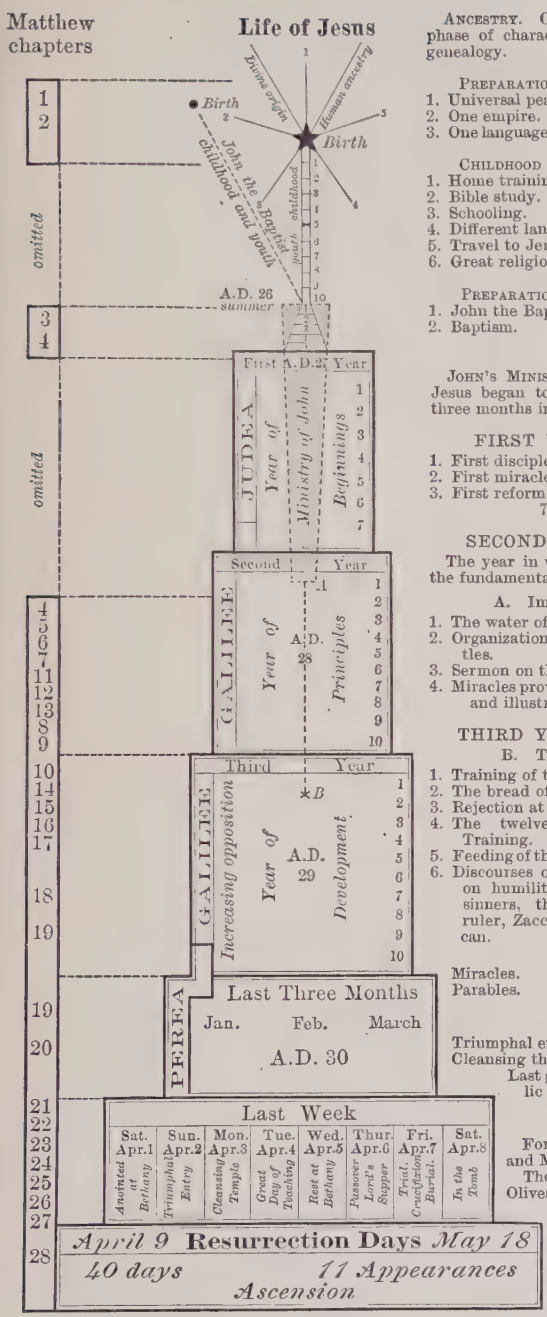
H.Courtier F.R.G.S.

B. Beautiful Gate (?)
C. Chambers for treasures & offerings Neh.XII.44, Mal.III.10.
G. The Hall Gazith, where the Sanhedrim met
T. 13 Trumpet shaped Treasure Chests
W. Galleries in which the women usually worshipped
(men assembled in the court below)



ANCESTRY. On one side God himself. On the other every phase of character, every human tendency represented in his genealogy.

PREPARATIONS FOR HIS COMING.

1. Universal peace.
2. One empire.
3. One language generally known.
4. The Jews with the Scriptures in all lands.
5. A general awakening and unrest.

CHILDHOOD AND YOUTH.

1. Home training.
2. Bible study.
3. Schooling.
4. Different languages.
5. Travel to Jerusalem.
6. Great religious meetings.
7. Village life.
8. Work at a trade.
9. Knowledge of his country's history and hopes.
10. A perfect and beautiful character.

PREPARATIONS FOR HIS MINISTRY.

1. John the Baptist.
2. Baptism.
3. The Holy Spirit.
4. The voice from God.
5. Temptation.

JOHN'S MINISTRY OF PREPARATION began six months before Jesus began to preach, continued through the first year and three months into the second year.

FIRST YEAR,—YEAR OF BEGINNINGS.

1. First disciples.
2. First miracle.
3. First reform.
4. First discourse.
5. First tour.
6. First Samaritan disciple.
7. First work of Galilean ministry.

SECOND YEAR,—YEAR OF PRINCIPLES.

The year in which Jesus laid down and worked out many of the fundamental principles and truths of his kingdom.

A. Imprisonment of John the Baptist, March.

1. The water of life.
2. Organization. Choosing apostles.
3. Sermon on the Mount.
4. Miracles proving his authority and illustrating his work.
5. Forgiveness of sins.
6. Seeking the lost.
7. Life from the dead.
8. The light of the world.
9. Warnings and invitations.
10. Parables.

THIRD YEAR,—YEAR OF DEVELOPMENT.

B. The death of John the Baptist in March.

1. Training of the twelve.
2. The bread of life.
3. Rejection at Nazareth.
4. The twelve sent forth. Training.
5. Feeding of the five thousand.
6. Discourses on the Sabbath, on humility, welcome to sinners, the rich young ruler, Zaccheus the publican.
7. Miracles: The dropsical man, the ten lepers, blind Bartimeus.
8. The transfiguration.
9. The children.
10. Parables: The great supper, the lost sheep, the lost coin, the prodigal son, the unjust steward, the rich man and Lazarus, the pounds.

LAST THREE MONTHS.

Miracles.
Parables.
Instructions.
Children.

LAST WEEK.

Triumphal entry.
Cleansing the temple.
Last great day of public teaching.
Instructions to his disciples.
The Lord's Supper.
The trial. The crucifixion.
The burial.

RESURRECTION DAYS.

Forty days. Eleven appearances, between April 9 and May 18, A. D. 30.

The Ascension, Thursday, May 18, from Mount of Olives.

THE EVER-LIVING SAVIOUR.

Return through the Holy Spirit. A Saviour in heaven. Appears in glory to Paul, and to John in a vision. Description of Jesus' heavenly glory. His second coming; a universal king; the world redeemed.

HARMONY OF THE LIFE OF CHRIST.

The order of events is in general according to Andrews' Life of Christ.

Period.	Outline.	No.	Events.	Place.	Date.	Matt.	Mark.	Luke.	John.	John the Baptist.
	Introduction.	1	Preëxistence						1 : 1–14	
		2	Genealogies			1 : 1–17		3 : 23–28		
	Childhood B. C. 5 to A. D. 26.	3	Annunciation to Mary	Nazareth	March B. C. 5			1 : 26–38		B. C. 5
		4	Birth of John the Baptist	Judea	June "			1 : 57–80		
		5	Birth of Jesus	Bethlehem	Dec. "	1 : 18–25		2 : 1–7		
		6	Song of the angels	"	" "			2 : 8–20		
		7	Visit of the wise men	"	Jan. B. C. 4	2 : 1–12				
		8	Flight into Egypt	Egypt	Feb. "	2 : 13–23				
		9	Childhood and youth at Nazareth	Nazareth	B. C. 2–26	2 : 23		2 : 39, 40, 51, 52		
Preparations.	and Youth.	10	First Passover at Jerusalem, when 12 years old.	Jerusalem	April A. D. 8			2 : 41–50		
	Preparations. A. D. 26.	11	Ministry of John the Baptist, six months before, and a year and three months parallel with Jesus' ministry.	Wilderness of Judea	From summer of A. D. 26 to March A. D. 28.	3 : 1–12	1 : 1–8	3 : 1–18		A. D. 27. Summer.
		12	Baptism of Jesus	Jordan	January 27	3 : 13–17	1 : 9–11	3 : 21–23		
		13	Temptation of Jesus	Wilderness of Judea.	Jan.–Feb. 27.	4 : 1–11	1 : 12, 13	4 : 1–13		
A. D. 27.					A. D. 27.					
Feb. Judean Ministry. (About one year.) Dec.	First Year of Jesus' Ministry. A. D. 27.	14	First disciples	Bethabara	February				1 : 15–51	
		15	First miracle. Wedding at Cana	Cana	"				2 : 1–12	
		16	First cleansing of the temple	Jerusalem	April 11–17.				2 : 13–25	
		17	First recorded discourse, — to Nicodemus.	"	" "				3 : 1–21	
		18	First great ministry in Judea	Judea	Summer and autumn.				3 : 22–36	Imprisoned, March A. D. 28.
	Year of Beginnings.	19	Departure for Galilee		December				4 : 1–3	
		20	First converts in Samaria at Jacob's well.	Sychar	"				4 : 4–42	
		21	Healing of the nobleman's son	Capernaum	"				4 : 43–54	
		22	A few weeks spent by Jesus in retirement, or unrecorded.		A. D. 28. Jan.–Mar.					
		23	Passover	Jerusalem	Mar. 30-Apr. 5				5 : 1	
		24	Healing at the pool of Bethesda and discourses.	"	" "				5 : 2–47	

Childhood and youth

Public Ministry of John.

April A. D. 28.		25	Imprisonment of John the Baptist	Macherus....	March.....	14 : 3-5	6 : 17, 18	3 : 19, 20	.....
		26	Returns to Galilee. Beginning of *Great Galilean Ministry.*	Galilee.....	April.....	4 : 12	1 : 14, 15	4 : 14, 15	.....
		27	Jesus rejected at Nazareth.....	Nazareth ...	"	.....	.....	4 : 16-30	.....
		28	Takes up his abode at Capernaum	Capernaum..	"	4 : 13-17	.....	4 : 31	.....
		29	Calling disciples to be fishers of men	Sea of Galilee	April, May..	4 : 18-22	1 : 16-20	5 : 1-11	.....
		30	Many miracles.....	Capernaum..	" "	8 : 14-17	1 : 21-34	4 : 31-41	.....
	SECOND YEAR.	31	First circuit of Galilee.....	Galilee.....	" "	4 : 23, 24	1 : 35-39	4 : 42-44	.....
		32	Healing of a leper.....	"	May.....	8 : 2-4	1 : 40-45	5 : 12-16	.....
		33	Healing a paralytic.....	Capernaum..	May, June...	9 : 2-8	2 : 1-12	5 : 17-26	.....
		34	The call of Matthew.....	"	" "	9 : 9	2 : 13, 14	5 : 27, 28	.....
		35	Discourse on the Sabbath.....	"	" "	12 : 1-8	2 : 23-28	6 : 1-5	.....
		36	The man with the withered hand healed on the Sabbath.	"	" "	12 : 9-14	3 : 1-6	6 : 6-11	.....
		37	Calling of the twelve.....	Horns of Hattin.	Midsummer..	10 : 2-4	3 : 13-19	6 : 12-19	.....
	A. D. 28.	38	The Sermon on the Mount.....	"	"	chapters. 5, 6, 7	.....	6 : 20-49	.....
		39	Healing of the centurion's servant.	Capernaum..	"	8 : 5-13	.....	7 : 1-10	.....
		40	Raising of the widow's son.....	Nain.....	"	.....	.....	7 : 11-17	.....
		41	John the Baptist sends to Jesus...	Galilee.....	"	11 : 2-19	.....	7 : 18-35	.....
		42	Warnings and invitations (here or at No. 80).	"	.....	11 : 20-30	.....	.....	.....
		43	The woman, a sinner. The two debtors. At Pharisee's house.	.....	Midsummer..	.....	.....	7 : 36-50	.....
	YEAR OF FUNDAMENTAL PRINCIPLES.	44	Another tour of Galilee.....	Galilee.....	Autumn.....	.....	.....	8 : 1-3	.....
		45	Healing of a blind and dumb demoniac and discourses thereon.	Capernaum..	"	12 : 22-45	3 : 22-30	(11 : 14-23)	.....
		46	Visit of his mother and brethren..	"	"	12 : 46-50	3 : 31-35	8 : 19-21	.....
		47	Eight parables by the seaside.....	By Sea of Galilee.	"	13 : 1-53	4 : 1-34	8 : 4-18	.....
		48	Stilling of the tempest.....	On Sea of Galilee.	"	8 : 18-27	4 : 35-41	8 : 22-25	.....
		49	Restoration of the demoniac.....	Gergesa.....	"	8 : 28-34	5 : 1-20	8 : 26-39	.....
		50	Matthew's feast.....	Capernaum..	"	9 : 10-17	2 : 15-22	5 : 29-39	.....
		51	Jairus' daughter raised to life; woman cured.	"	"	9 : 18-26	5 : 21-43	8 : 40-56	.....
		52	Cure of two blind men and a dumb possessed.	"	"	9 : 27-34	.....	.....	.....
					A. D. 29.				
		53	Second rejection at Nazareth.....	Nazareth....	Winter.....	13 : 53-58	6 : 1-6	.....	.....
		54	The twelve sent forth.....	Galilee.....	"	9 : 35 to 11 : 1	6 : 6-13	9 : 1-6	.....
		55	Death of John the Baptist.....	Macherus....	March.....	14 : 1-12	6 : 14-29	9 : 7-9	.....

John the Baptist in prison at Macherus one year. — Martyred March A. D. 29.

Period.	Outline.	No.	Events.	Place.	Date.	Matt.	Mark.	Luke.	John.
April A. D. 28.	Third Year.	56	Feeding of the five thousand	Bethsaida	April	14 : 13–21	6 : 30–46	9 : 10–17	6 : 1–15
		57	Jesus walks upon the water	Sea of Galilee	"	14 : 22–33	6 : 47–52	.....	6 : 16–21
		58	Heals many that are sick	Gennesaret	"	14 : 34, 35	6 : 53–56	.....	.....
		59	Discourse on the bread of life	Capernaum	"	.....	.....	.....	6 : 22–71
		60	Discourse on eating with unwashen hands.	"	"	15 : 1–20	7 : 1–23	.....	.....
		61	Journey toward Sidon. Heals daughter of Syrophenician woman.	Region of Tyre and Sidon.	Summer	15 : 21–28	7 : 24–30	.....	.....
	A. D. 29.	62	Return through Decapolis, and miracles of healing.	Decapolis	"	15 : 29–31	7 : 31–37	.....	.....
		63	Feeding the four thousand	"	"	15 : 32–39	8 : 1–10	.....	.....
		64	Demanding a sign from heaven and the warning.	Capernaum. Sea of Galilee	"	16 : 1–12	8 : 11–21	.....	.....
		65	Blind man healed	Bethsaida.	"	.....	8 : 22–26	.....	.....
	Year of Development.	66	Peter's confession of faith	Near Cesarea Philippi.	"	16 : 13–20	8 : 27–30	9 : 18–21	.....
		67	Jesus for the first time foretells his death and resurrection.	"	"	16 : 21–28	8 : 31 to 9 : 1	9 : 22–27	.....
		68	The transfiguration	"	"	17 : 1–13	9 : 2–13	9 : 28–36	.....
		69	Healing of demoniac boy	"	"	17 : 14–21	9 : 14–29	9 : 37–43	.....
		70	Jesus again foretells his death and resurrection.	Galilee.	"	17 : 22, 23	9 : 30–32	9 : 43–45	.....
		71	Jesus and the children	Capernaum	"	18 : 1–14	9 : 13–50	9 : 46–50	.....
		72	Discourse and parable on forgiving	"	Summer	18 : 15–35	.....	.....	.....
	Great Deeds amid Great Opposition.	73	At the Feast of Tabernacles	Jerusalem	Autumn	.....	.....	.....	7 : 1 to 10 : 21
		74	Discourses on the water of life	"	October 11–18	.....	.....	.....	7 : 32–44
		75	On light and freedom	"	" "	.....	.....	.....	8 : 12–59
		76	On one born blind	"	" "	.....	.....	.....	9 : 1–39
		77	The Good Shepherd	"	" "	.....	.....	.....	10 : 1–21
		78	Returns to Galilee	.....	Autumn	.....	.....	.....	.....
		79	Final departure from Galilee	Galilee	Nov., Dec.	19 : 1	10 : 1	9 : 51	.....
Dec. A. D. 29.		80	The mission of the seventy	Perea	" "	.....	.....	10 : 1–24	.....
		81	Parable of Good Samaritan	"	" "	.....	.....	10 : 25–37	.....
		82	Discourse on prayer	"	" "	.....	.....	11 : 1–13	.....
		83	Answers attacks of the Pharisees.	"	" "	.....	.....	11 : 14–54	.....
		84	Discourse on great moral truths. The rich fool.	"	" "	.....	.....	12 : 1–59	.....

The great Galilean Ministry (one year and nine months).

Increasing Opposition.

Perean Ministry (four or five months).

March A.D. 30.

A. D. 29. Great Deeds amid Great Opposition.	85	Discourses. Galileans slain by Pilate. Barren fig-tree. Healing on the Sabbath. Parables of mustard seed and leaven. The strait gate. Lament over Jerusalem.	"	" "	.....	.....	13 : 1–35	.....
	86	Jesus the guest of Mary and Martha	Bethany.....	" "	.....	.....	10 : 38–42	.....
	87	Feast of dedication. Discourses..	Jerusalem...	December 20–27	.....	.....	.....	10 : 22–39
				A. D. 30.				
	88	Jesus retires beyond Jordan.....	Perea.....	January	.....	.....	.....	10 : 40–42
	89	Dines with a Pharisee. Discussions	"	"	.....	.....	14 : 1–14	.....
	90	Parable of the great supper.....	"	"	.....	.....	14 : 15–24	.....
	91	Counting the cost of being a disciple.	"	"	.....	.....	14 : 25–35	.....
A. D. 30.	92	Parables of lost sheep and lost piece of silver.	"	"	.....	.....	15 : 1–10	....
	93	Parable of prodigal son.....	"	"	.....	.....	15 : 11–32	.....
Three Months.	94	Parable of unjust steward.....	"	"	.....	.....	16 : 1–13	.....
	95	Parable of rich man and Lazarus..	"	"	.....	.....	16 : 14–31	.....
	96	Instruction on forgiveness and faith	"	"	.....	.....	17 : 1–10	.....
	97	Raising of Lazarus.....	Bethany.....	February....	.....	.....	.....	11 : 1–46
	98	Jesus retires to Ephraim in northern Judea till near the time for the Passover.	Ephraim	February, March.	.....	....	.....	11 : 47–57
Culmination of Miracles and Teaching.	99	The healing of the ten lepers.....	On borders of Samaria.	March	.....	.....	17 : 11–19	.....
	100	The sudden coming of the kingdom	Perea.....	"	.....	.....	17 : 20–37	.....
	101	The importunate widow. The Pharisee and the publican.	"	"	.....	.....	18 : 1–14	.....
	102	Discourse about divorce.....	"	"	19 : 2–12	10 : 2–12	.....	.....
	103	Christ blesses little children.....	"	"	19 : 13–15	10 : 13–16	18 : 15–17	.....
	104	The rich young ruler.....	"	"	19 : 16–30	10 : 17–31	18 : 18–30	.....
	105	Parable of the laborers in the vineyard.	"	"	20 : 1–16	.....	.....	.....
	106	Our Lord makes a third prediction of his death and resurrection.	"	"	20 : 17–19	10 : 32–34	18 : 31–34	.....
	107	Ambitious request of James and John.	"	"	20 : 20–28	10 : 35–45	.....	.....
	108	Healing of two blind men (Bartimeus) near Jericho.	Jericho.....	"	20 : 29–34	10 : 46–52	18 : 35–43	.....
	109	Visit to Zaccheus the publican....	"	"	.....	.....	19 : 1–10	.....
	110	Parable of the pounds (Minæ)....	"	"	.....	.....	19 : 11–28	.....

Increasing Opposition.

HARMONY OF THE LIFE OF CHRIST (*continued*).

Period.	Outline.	No.	Events.	Place.	Time.	Matt.	Mark.	Luke.	John.
Friday, Mar. 31.	A. D. 30.	111	Jesus arrives at Bethany from Jericho.	Bethany.....	Fri., Mar. 31.	.....	.....	.....	12 : 1.....
		112	Anointing by Mary.....	"	Sat., April 1	26 : 6-13.....	14 : 3-9....	.....	12 : 2-11...
		113	Triumphal entry. Visit to temple. Return to Bethany.	Jerusalem...	Sun., April 2	21 : 1-11.....	11 : 1-11...	19 : 29-44..	12 : 12-19..
		114	Cursing of the barren fig-tree.....	Mt. of Olives	Mon., April 3	21 : 18, 19.....	11 : 12-14..	.....	.....
		115	Cleansing of the temple. Return to Bethany.	Jerusalem...	" "	21 : 12-17.....	11 : 15-19..	19 : 45-48 21 : 37, 38	.....
Last Week.	Last Day of Public Teaching.	116	The fig-tree withered. Lesson on faith.	Mt. of Olives	Tues., Apr. 4	21 : 20-22.....	11 : 20-26..	.....	.....
		117	Christ's authority questioned.....	Temple at Jerusalem	" "	21 : 23-27.....	11 : 27-33..	20 : 1-8....	.....
		118	Parable of the two sons.....	"	" "	21 : 28-32.....	.....	.....	.....
		119	Parable of the wicked husbandmen	"	" "	21 : 33-46.....	12 : 1-12...	20 : 9-19...	.....
		120	Parable of the marriage of the king's son.	"	" "	22 : 1-14.....	.....	.....	.....
		121	Pharisees question Jesus about tribute.	"	" "	22 : 15-22.....	12 : 13-17..	20 : 20-26..	.....
		122	Sadducees question about resurrection.	"	" "	22 : 23-33.....	12 : 18-27..	20 : 27-40..	.....
		123	Lawyer questions about the great commandment.	"	" "	22 : 34-40.....	12 : 28-34..	.....	.....
		124	Jesus asks, "What think ye of Christ?"	"	" "	22 : 41-46.....	12 : 35-37..	20 : 41-44..	.....
		125	Woes against the scribes and Pharisees.	"	" "	23 : 1-36.....	12 : 38-40..	20 : 45-47..	.....
		126	Lamentation over Jerusalem.....	"	" "	23 : 37-39.....	.....	.....	.....
		127	The widow's mite.....	"	" "	.....	12 : 41-44..	21 : 1-4....	.....
		128	Greeks seek Jesus. Discourse....	"	" "	.....	.....	.....	12 : 20-50..
		129	Prophecy of overthrow of the temple and end of the world.	Mt. of Olives	" "	24 : 1-51.....	13 : 1-37...	21 : 5-36...	.....
		130	Parable of the ten virgins.....	" "	" "	25 : 1-13.....	.....	.....	.....
		131	Parable of the talents.....	" "	" "	25 : 14-30.....	.....	.....	.....
		132	The last judgment.....	" "	" "	25 : 31-46.....	.....	.....	.....
		133	Plotting of rulers. Bargain of Judas.	Jerusalem...	" "	26 : 1-5.....	14 : 1, 2..	22 : 1-6....	.....
						26 : 14-16.....	14 : 10, 11		
		134	Jesus in retirement.....	Bethany.....	Wed., Apr. 5	....	.....	.....	.....

THE LAST SUPPER.	135	Preparation for the Passover	Jerusalem	Thur., Apr. 6	26 : 17-19	14 : 12-16	22 : 7-13	
	136	Arrival at the upper room	"	" "	26 : 20	14 : 17	22 : 14	
	137	Strife for precedence	"	" "			22 : 24-30	
	138	Jesus washes the feet of his disciples.	"	" "				13 : 1-20
	139	The paschal supper	"	" "			22 : 15-18	
	140	Jesus declares the betrayer. Judas goes out.	"	" "	26 : 21-25	14 : 18-21	22 : 21-23	13 : 21-35
	141	Institution of the Lord's Supper	"	" "	26 : 26-29	14 : 22-25	22 : 19-20	(1 Cor. 11 : 23-25)
	142	Jesus foretells the fall of Peter	"	" "			22 : 31-38	13 : 36-38
	143	Farewell discourse of Jesus	"	" "				chaps. 14-16
	144	Prayer of Jesus for his disciples	"	" "				17 : 1-26
	145	Jesus goes forth. Peter's confidence.	"	" "	26 : 30-35	14 : 26-31	22 : 39	18 : 1-3
	146	The agony in the garden of Gethsemane.	Mt. of Olives	" "	26 : 36-46	14 : 32-42	22 : 40-46	
	147	The betrayal	" "	" "	26 : 47-50	14 : 43-45	22 : 47, 48	18 : 4-9
	148	The arrest	" "	Midnight	26 : 50-56	14 : 46-52	22 : 49-53	18 : 10-12
THE JEWISH TRIAL.	149	Jesus led to Annas, then to Caiaphas	Jerusalem	Fri., Apr. 7, 1-5 A. M.				18 : 13-15
	150	Jesus before Caiaphas	"	"	26 : 57, 58	14 : 53, 54	22 : 54, 55	18 : 19-24
	151	Jesus before the Sanhedrim	"	"	26 : 59-66	14 : 55-64		
	152	Denials of Peter	"	"	26 : 69-75	14 : 66-72	22 : 56-62	18 : 15-18 18 : 25-27
	153	Jesus mocked by his enemies	"	"	26 : 67, 68	14 : 65	22 : 63-65	
	154	Meeting of the Sanhedrim. Jesus condemned for blasphemy.	"	5-6 A. M.	27 : 1, 2	15 : 1	22 : 66-71 23 : 1	
	155	Death of Judas	"	"	27 : 3-10	Acts 1 : 18, 19		
	156	Jesus before Pilate; on three charges.	"	"	27 : 11-14	15 : 2-5	23 : 2-5	18 : 28-38
THE ROMAN TRIAL.	157	Jesus sent to Herod	"	"			23 : 6-12	
	158	Pilate seeks to release Jesus. Jews demand Barabbas.	"	"	27 : 15-23	15 : 6-14	23 : 13-23	18 : 38-40
	159	Jesus condemned, scourged, and mocked by soldiers.	"	"	27 : 26-30	15 : 15-19	23 : 24, 25	19 : 1-3
	160	Pilate again seeks to release Jesus	"	"	27 : 24, 25			19 : 4-16
	161	Jesus is led away to be crucified	"	9 A. M.	27 : 31-34 27 : 38	15 : 20-23 15 : 25, 27, 28	23 : 26-32	19 : 16-18
	162	The superscription	Jerusalem	9 A. M.	27 : 37	15 : 26	23 : 38	19 : 19-22
	163	*First word* from the cross (" Father, forgive them ").	"	"			23 : 33, 34	
	164	Soldiers cast lots for his garments.	"	"	27 : 35, 36	15 : 24	23 : 34	19 : 23, 24

HARMONY OF THE LIFE OF CHRIST (*continued*).

Period.	Outline.	No.	Events.	Place.	Time.	Matt.	Mark.	Luke.	John.
The last Week.	The Crucifixion.	165	Jews mock at Jesus on the cross	Jerusalem	9 A. M.	27 : 39–44	15 : 29–32	23 : 35–37	
		166	*Second word* (the penitent thief)	"	"			23 : 39–43	
		167	*Third word* ("Woman, behold thy son").	"	"				19 : 25–27
		168	Darkness covers the land	"	12 M.	27 : 45	15 : 33	23 : 44, 45	
		169	*Fourth word* (cry of distress to God).	"	"	27 : 46, 47	15 : 34, 35		
		170	*Fifth word* ("I thirst")	"	"	27 : 48, 49	15 : 36		19 : 28, 29
		171	*Sixth word* ("It is finished")	"	"				19 : 30
		172	*Seventh word* ("Into thy hands," etc.).	"	"			23 : 46	
		173	Jesus dies. Veil rent. Earthquake	"	3 P. M.	27 : 50–56	15 : 37–41	23 : 45, 46–49	19 : 30
Friday, Apr. 7.		174	Jesus is pierced with a spear in the side.	"	"				19 : 31–37
		175	The burial. The watch at the sepulchre.	"	3–6 P. M.	27 : 57–66	15 : 42–47	23 : 50–56	19 : 38–42
Resurrection Days.	The Resurrection.	176	The morning of the resurrection	Jerusalem	Sun., April 9	28 : 2–4			
		177	Women come to the sepulchre	"	" "	28 : 1	16 : 1–4	24 : 1, 2	20 : 1
		178	Mary Magdalene calls Peter and John.	"	" "				20 : 2
		179	The women at the sepulchre	"	" "	28 : 5–8	16 : 5–8	24 : 3–8	
		180	Peter and John go to the sepulchre	"	" "			24 : 12	20 : 3–10
		181	Jesus appears to Mary Magdalene	"	" "		16 : 9–11		20 : 11–18
		182	He appears to the women	"	" "	28 : 9, 10		24 : 9–11	
		183	The guard report to the priests	"	" "	28 : 11–15			
		184	Jesus appears to two on the way to Emmaus.	Emmaus	" "		16 : 12, 13	24 : 13–35	
		185	He appears to Peter	Jerusalem	" "		(1 Cor. 15 : 5)		
		186	He appears to the apostles except Thomas.	"	" "	(1 Cor. 15 : 5)	16 : 14	24 : 36–48	20 : 19–23
		187	He appears to all the apostles including Thomas.	Jerusalem	Sun., April 16				20 : 24–29
		188	He appears to seven in Galilee	Sea of Galilee	April				21 : 1–23
		189	He appears to a multitude, more than 500.	Galilee	April, May	28 : 16–20	16 : 15–18	(1 Cor. 15 : 6)	
		190	He appears to James	"		(1 Cor. 15 : 7)			

The Ascension.	191	He appears to all the apostles....	Jerusalem...	.....	(Acts **1** : 1–8)..	.....	**24** : 49.....	.....
	192	The ascension	Bethany.....	Thur., May 18	(Acts **1** : 9–12).	**16** : 19.....	**24** : 50–53..	.....
	193	Conclusions of Mark and John....	.....	.....	.....	**16** : 20.....	.....	**20** : 30, 31.. **21** : 24, 25..
	194	Holy spirit given. Pentecost.	Jerusalem...	Sun., May 28	(Acts **2** : 1–11).	.....	.....	.....
Continued Life.	195	Jesus appears to Paul	Damascus...	A. D. 37.....	(Acts **22** : 6–16)	.....	.....	.....
	196	Jesus appears to John.....	Patmos.....	A. D. 68 or 96	(Rev. **1** : 9–20).	.....	.....	.....
	197	Jesus our high priest in heaven...	.....	.....	(Heb. **9** : 11–28)	.....	.....	.....
	198	New heaven and earth, where Jesus reigns.	.....	.....	(Rev. **21** : 1–27)	.....	.....	.....

EXPLANATIONS.

MARGINAL REFERENCES.

THE Marginal References are those prepared under the supervision of the University Presses of Oxford and Cambridge, and completed in 1898, for their Revised Version.

The marginal references given in the original edition of the Authorized Version of 1611 have been retained as far as possible, and the Contributors have availed themselves largely of the references in Dr. Scrivener's Paragraph Bible, which they were instructed to make the basis of their work.

The references given may be arranged under the following heads: —

1. Quotations, or exact verbal parallels.
2. Passages referred to for similarity of idea or of expression.
3. Passages referred to by way of explanation or illustration.
4. Historical and Geographical references: — names of persons, places, etc., which recur.
5. Passages referred to as illustrating differences of rendering between the Authorized and Revised Versions.

The following modes of indication have been used: —

1. A simple index letter is employed, when there is an exact or close parallel between the passages.
2. "Cited," or "Cited from," is prefixed to cases of actual quotation.
3. "Cp." (compare) is prefixed to references, when the parallel is less exact.
4. "See" is prefixed: —
   (*a*) When reference is made to a parallel passage, on which a body of references has been collected:
   (*b*) In referring to longer passages, parallel or explanatory. When one longer passage is given as a parallel to another of similar length, the mode of indication is "For &c., see &c."
5. "*al.*" (= *alibi*, elsewhere) is added to indicate that all the parallel passages are not given.
6. "(?)" is placed after a reference, when its appropriateness is doubtful.
7. "(mg.)," "(& mg.)," "(for mg.)," "(mg. for mg.)" are used when references relate solely or partly to the Revisers' marginal renderings.

THE COMBINED TEXT.

WHERE the texts of the Authorized and Revised Versions are alike, the words are printed in a single line in large, clear type. Where they are unlike, the difference is set forth by means of double lines of smaller type. The Authorized Version can be read by following the large type line to any point of difference in the respective versions, and then, until the texts are again identical, by reading the *upper* small type line. In a similar manner, the Revised Version can be read by following the large type line to any point of difference, and then the *lower* small type line.

THE

GOSPEL ACCORDING TO MATTHEW.

CHAPTER 1.

SECTION I. — THE HUMAN ANCESTRY OF JESUS. 1:1-17.

THE THREE PERIODS:
1. From Abraham to David.
2. From David to the Exile.
3. From the Exile to Jesus the Christ.

NOTES ON THE GENEALOGIES.
PRACTICAL SUGGESTIONS.

1 THE book of the [a] generation of Jĕ'sus Chrīst, [b] the son of Dā'vid, [c] the son of Ā'brā-hăm.

a Cp. Luke 3. 23-38. *b* 2 Sam. 7. 12-16. Ps. 132. 11. Isai. 11. 1 Jer. 23. 5. Luke 1. 32, 69. John 7. 42. Acts 2. 30 & 13. 23. Rom. 1. 3. 2 Tim. 2. 8. Rev. 22. 16. *c* Gen. 22. 18 Gal. 3. 16. Cp. Rom. 9. 5.

The Gospel, — εὐαγγέλιον (εὐ, *well*, as in *well* done, and ἄγγελος, *messenger*, whence our word angel). It "signifies originally *a present given in return for joyful news*. Thus Homer makes Ulysses say to Eumæus,' Let this *reward*, εὐαγγέλιον, be given me for my good news' (*Od.* XIV. 152). Later it comes to mean *the good news itself* — the joyful tidings of Messiah's kingdom."[1] Our English word *Gospel* is compounded either of *good* and *spell* (=*story*, *news*) "the good news;" or *God* (which is short for *Good*) and *spell*, *God's story*, or *word*, or *news*. It is good news from God or the story about God, what he has done to bless and save men.

According to Matthew. It is not the Gospel *of* Matthew, but God's Gospel, God's Good News, as witnessed and recorded by Matthew.

1. The book of the generation. "The book of Origin, the title of the genealogy which follows in vers. 2-16. The evangelist adopted the genealogical piece of writing . . . without alteration as he found it, and with its title also."[2]

Of Jesus Christ. Jesus was his individual name; Christ his official name.

JESUS is the Greek form of the Hebrew Joshua (*Jehovah is Salvation*). Joshua of Hebrew history was the captain who led the Israelites into the Promised Land, and gained the victory over all their enemies. Hence his name is a fitting one for the Son of Mary, named Jesus, "for he shall save his people from their sins," ver. 21; "and he shall reign over the house of David for ever," Luke 1: 33.

CHRIST, an adjective afterwards become a proper name meaning *Anointed*, is the Greek translation of the Hebrew word *Messiah;* one set apart for some special work by Anointing, used especially of kings, prophets, and priests. It was the title of Jesus as Prophet, Priest, and King, all of which offices were included in the Messiah. Before this time it came to be the popular designation of the promised Messiah, the expected Deliverer, Redeemer, and King. Anointing is frequently applied to Jesus in the record of his life. He was anointed as a guest, as a mark of honor. "Anointing was an act of hospitality, and a sign of festivity and cheerfulness." "Jesus as the Great Physician is described by Isaiah (61: 1, 2, compare Luke 4: 18) as *Anointed* by God to bind up the broken-hearted, and to give the mournful the oil of joy for mourning."[3]

The son of David. Two Greek words are used almost interchangeably for son or child, υἱός, *son*, and τέκνον, *child*, *one born*. This last is never applied to Christ, but only "Son." For, while τέκνον lays emphasis on "the fact of descent, of being born from," υἱός emphasizes the "privilege, dignity, and freedom" of sonship. Hence this same word is used to express the relationship of Christians as *sons of God* (Rom. 8: 14; Gal. 3: 26).

THE SON OF DAVID the king, and therefore heir to his throne, and the inheritor of God's promises to him that he would "stablish the throne of his kingdom forever" (2 Sam. 7: 13-16).

The son of Abraham. Therefore a true Jew

[1] Prof. Marvin R. Vincent, in *Word Studies*. [2] Prof. H. A. W. Meyer, Th. D. [3] Prof. Marvin R. Vincent.

2 [d] Ā′bră-hăm begat Ī′s̤a̤ac;
And [e] Ī′s̤a̤ac begat Jā′co̤b;
And [f] Jā′co̤b begat Ju′das / Ju′dah and his brethren;
3 And / and [g] Ju′das / Ju′dah begat Pha′res / Pe′rez and Za′ra / Ze′rah of Tha′mar; / Ta′mar;
And Pha′res / Pe′rez begat Es′rom; / Hez′ron;
And Es′rom / Hez′ron begat A′ram; / Ram;
4 And A′ram / and Ram begat A-min′a-dab; / Am-min′a-dab;
And A-min′a-dab / Am-min′a-dab begat Na-as′son; / Nah′shon;
And Na-as′son / Nah′shon begat Săl′mŏn;
5 And / and Săl′mŏn begat Bo′oz / Bo′az of [h] Ra′chab; / Ra′hab;
And Bo′oz / Bo′az begat Ō′bed of Rṳth;
And Ō′bed begat Jĕs′se;
6 And / and [i] Jĕs′se̤ begat Dā′vid the king:
and / And [j] Dā′vid the king begat Sŏl′o-mon of [k] her *that had been the wife* of U-ri′as; / U-ri′ah:
7 And / and [l] Sŏl′o-mon begat Ro-bo′am; / Re-ho-bo′am;
And Ro-bo′am / Re-ho-bo′am begat A-bi′a; / A-bi′jah;
And A-bi′a / A-bi′jah begat Ā′sȧ;
8 And / and Ā′sȧ begat Jos′a-phat; / Je-hosh′a-phat;
And Jos′a-phat / Je-hosh′a-phat begat Jō′ram;
And [m] Jō′ram begat O-zi′as; / Uz-zi′ah;
9 And O-zi′as / and Uz-zi′ah begat Jo′a-tham; / Jo′tham;
And Jo′a-tham / Jo′tham begat A′chaz; / A′haz;
And A′chaz / A′haz begat Ez-e-ki′as; / Hez-e-ki′ah;
10 And Ez-e-ki′as / and Hez-e-ki′ah begat Ma-nas′ses; / Ma-nas′seh;
And Ma-nas′ses / Ma-nas′seh begat Ā′mon;
And Ā′mon begat Jo-si′as; / Jo-si′ah;
11 And / and [n] Jo-si′as / Jo-si′ah begat [o] Jech-o-ni′as / Jech-o-ni′ah and his brethren, about / at the time they were / of the [o] carried / carrying away to Băb′y̆-lon:

d Gen. 21. 3. *e* Gen. 25. 26. *f* Gen. 29. 35. *g* Cp. Ruth 4. 18–22 & 1 Chr. 2. 1–15. *h* Josh. 6. 25. *i* 1 Sam. 16. 1 & 17. 12. *j* 2 Sam. 12. 24. *k* 2 Sam. 12. 10. *l* For ver. 7–10, see 1 Chr. 3. 10–14. *m* Cp. 2 Kin. 15. 1 & 1 Chr. 3. 11, 12. *n* 1 Chr. 3. 15, 16. *o* Esth. 2. 6. Jer. 24. 1 & 27. 20.

and inheritor of the promises made to Abraham, and the means by which they were fulfilled, for "in his seed shall all the nations of the earth be blessed," and that seed shall be "as the stars of heaven" (Gen. 22: 17, 18).

2–17. In the Authorized Version the names in this list are the Greek forms of Hebrew names as ordinarily used by the people who first read the Gospels, just as we say Florence for the Italian city Firenze, Leghorn for Livorno, or New York for the Latin Novum Eboracum, or William for Gulielmus.

The Revision, as given in the text above, uses the forms common in the Old Testament, so that they may be recognized as the same.

7, 8. **Roboam, Abia, Asa, Josaphat.** — "I find the genealogy of my Saviour strangely checkered with four remarkable changes in four immediate generations.

"(1) Roboam begat Abia; that is, a bad father begat a bad son.

"(2) Abia begat Asa; that is, a bad father a good son.

"(3) Asa begat Jehoshaphat; that is, a good father a good son.

"(4) Josaphat begat Joram; that is, a good father a bad son.

"I see from hence that my father's piety cannot be entailed; that is bad news for me. But I see, also, that actual impiety is not always hereditary; that is good news for my son." [1]

FOUR WOMEN are named in this genealogy, — Tamar, Rahab, Ruth, and Bathsheba. It has been noticed that two of these were of heathen

[1] Thomas Fuller, *Good Thoughts in Bad Times.*

12 And after (they were brought / the carrying away) to Băb′ў-lon, [p] (Jech-o-ni′as / Jech-o-ni′ah) begat [q] (Sa-la′thi-el; / She-al′ti-el;
And [r] (Sa-la′thi-el / She-al′ti-el) begat (Zo-rob′a-bel; / Ze-rub′ba-bel;
13 (And Zo-rob′a-bel / and Ze-rub′ba-bel) begat Ă-bī′ud;
And Ă-bī′ud begat Ĕ-lī′a-kĭm;
And Ĕ-lī′a-kĭm begat Ā′zôr;
14 (And / and) Ā′zôr begat Să′dŏc; and Să′dŏc begat Ā′chĭm;
And Ā′chĭm begat Ĕ-lī′ŭd;
15 (And / and) Ĕ-lī′ŭd begat Ē-le-ā′zar;
And Ē-le-ā′zar begat Măt′than;
And Măt′than begat Jā′cŏb;

16 (And / and) Jā′cŏb begat [s] Jō′sĕph the husband of Mā′rў, of whom was born Jē′sus, who is called Chrīst.

17 So all the generations from Ă′bră-hăm (to / unto) Dā′vid (are / are) fourteen generations; and from Dā′vid (until / unto) the carrying away (into / to) Băb′ў-lon (are / [t]) fourteen generations; and from the carrying away (into / to) Băb′ў-lon unto the Chrīst (are / are) fourteen generations.

p 1 Chr. 3. 17-19. *q* Luke 3. 27. *r* Ezra 3. 2. *s* Luke 3. 23. *t* ch. 2. 4 & 11. 2 & 16. 16 & 22. 42 & 23. 10. Mark 8. 29. Luke 3. 15. John 1. 20, *al.* Cp. John 1. 41 & 4. 25.

descent, and three had some scandal connected with their youth. It is not so often noticed that they all became *good and faithful*, and that there were many more bad men than women. So natural is it for some to see the fly in the precious ointment and fail to perceive its perfume; to note the caterpillar and not to notice its change into the butterfly.

Any long line of ancestry will have some bad links in it. And it was fitting that He who "was tempted like as we are," and came "to save that which is lost, should have the evil as well as the good in his ancestry."

12. **Jechonias begat Salathiel.** Jehoiachin had no children of his own; "write ye this man childless" (Jer. 22 : 30). Salathiel was the son of Neri (Luke), but heir to Jehoiachin.[1]

17. **Fourteen generations.** The genealogy of Jesus is here arranged in three groups of 14 members each. This form may have been adopted in the records to assist the memory. In order to make each group to consist of exactly 14 generations, some of the names of lesser importance were left out, as can be seen by comparing these lists with those recorded in 1 Chron. 3 and Luke 3. This is perfectly natural, especially in records of royal descent. We often speak of a person as the descendant of some noted ancestor omitting intervening obscure persons with whom it is not worth while to burden the memory; just as in travelling over a country we stop at only the chief places and take no note of the small towns through which the train passes.

It is a practice familiar to readers of Jewish antiquities.

The Three Groups of Fourteen correspond to three distinct periods of Jewish history, to three stages in their development, and their three forms of government.

First Group. From Abraham to David; the Patriarchal period; the government by theocracy. About 900 years, from B. C. 1996 to 1085 (according to Ussher's chronology).

Second Group. From David to the Exile. The Monarchy. About 500 years, B. C. 1085 to 586.

Third Group. From Jeconiah (the king of the Exile) to Jesus. The hierarchy or government by the priests, subordinate to other kingdoms. About 580 years, from B. C. 586–5.

The Two Genealogies. Besides the genealogy in Matthew we have another in Luke, which differs in several respects. Luke goes back to Adam, Matthew only to Abraham. From David, Luke's genealogy branches off to another line, Matthew apparently giving the *royal succession*, in the line of kings, and Luke the *actual descent*, the family pedigree; or else Matthew gives the line of Joseph, the legal succession, and Luke the line of Mary, the actual descent of Jesus through her from David.

Note 1. "The actual Davidic descent of Jesus is established as certain by the predictions of the prophets, which, in reference to so essential a mark of the Messiah, could not remain

[1] Rev. A. Carr, in Cambridge Bible.

without fulfilment; as well as by the unanimous testimony of the New Testament."[1]

NOTE 2. That Joseph was not the actual father of Jesus is plainly stated by both Matthew and Luke, and implied in the genealogies themselves, Matthew saying only that Joseph was the husband of Mary, and Luke begins his genealogy by speaking of Jesus as "being (as was supposed) the son of Joseph."

NOTE 3. It can scarcely be imagined, much less is it within the bounds of probability, that any author of any age should flatly contradict himself in two successive paragraphs referring to the same thing. In some way the genealogies must agree in his mind with the statements that Jesus was the son of Mary, an actual descendant of David, and that Joseph was only his putative father.

NOTE 4. The most probable theory is that entertained by a large number of the best commentators, that the table in Matthew gives the genealogy of Joseph, as the visible representative of the family and regarded by his contemporaries as the father of Jesus, and exhibits him as the heir to the throne of David and inheritor of the promises and Messianic prophecies; while the table in Luke gives the genealogy of Mary, and shows Jesus to be the actual son of David. The advocates of this view render Luke 3: 23, "Jesus being the son (as was supposed of Joseph) of Heli," the change being simply in the place of the parenthesis. Jesus, according to this reading, is a grandson of Heli, Mary's father, and thus a lineal descendant of David.

NOTE 5. Another theory is that "both genealogies show Joseph's descent," and are in fact equally genealogies of Mary's family. "Probably Joseph was the son of Heli and the heir to Jacob. It is conjectured with much probability that Jacob was Mary's father.

Matthan or Matthat

(According to Matthew) Jacob — Heli (according to Luke)

heir

Mary (?) — Joseph[2]

Or "Jacob and Heli probably married in succession the same wife," according to the Jewish levirate law (Deut. 25: 5–10), "and Joseph, who was the true son of one, was the legal heir of the other."[3]

PRACTICAL SUGGESTIONS.

1. What is the use of this dry list of hard names — this long ancestral pedigree? It has several important uses, so important that two of the evangelists give considerable space to these genealogies. It is often true in our experience that from things hard and dry and unpromising come most precious truths and unexpected blessings; as gold comes from the coarse rock; as vast fortunes have depended on family registers and town records; as some of the most practical scientific discoveries have come from the driest groups of facts; as a great geode, a dull-appearing stone, mentioned by Professor Vincent in the preface to his *Word Studies*, on being broken disclosed a mass of crystals arranged in the form of a cross. And he has succeeded in his hope "to break the shell of the words of life, and to lay bare their hidden jewels," and "help others to a clearer vision of that cross which is the centre and glory of the gospel."

2. One advantage of this genealogy is that it is one of the stones in the arch of the proof that Jesus is the Messiah, the One foretold in the Scriptures: he comes as a part of the Divine Providence which has been working through the ages for the redemption of man. It confirms our faith, and enlarges our vision.

3. In this line of Jesus' ancestry were a great variety of people of different races, of different characters, very bad and very good, and different talents and conditions in life, "all classes and conditions of men." He is "the heir of all the ages." Everything good and bad that belongs to human nature was among the influences that affected him. He belongs to the race. Thus he can be "the son of man." He was "tempted like as we are, yet without sin." He is able to enter into the whole extent of human experience, and to sympathize with every struggle to overcome hereditary foes within, as well as enemies without. We can recognize his victory, and know that the same is possible for us, and that we have his sympathy, forgiving love, and upward help.

4. "We inherit from thousands, from hundreds of thousands of ancestors. The blood of many families and tribes and races is mingled in our veins. . . . There are many potential men in every man, and which of them is to emerge he chooses for himself by a thousand silent moral preferences."[4]

[1] H. A. W. Meyer in his *Com.* on Matthew.

[2] See Cambridge Bible.

[3] For fuller discussion of this question, see *Int. Crit. Com.* on Luke 3: 23; the article by Dr. B. W. Bacon in Hastings' *Bib. Dic.*, art. "Genealogy of Jesus Christ," from the more advanced critical point of view. Prof. John D. Davis, *Dictionary of the Bible*, Lord A. Hervey's *The Genealogies of our Lord*, and the article by him in Smith's *Bible Dictionary*; and Godet's *Com.* on Luke.

[4] Prof. Henry Van Dyke, D. D., *The Gospel for an Age of Doubt*, "Liberty." See, also, *Heredity and Christian Problems*, by Amory H. Bradford, D. D.

SECTION II. — THE BIRTH OF JESUS. HIS DIVINE ORIGIN. 1: 18–25.

MARY THE MOTHER OF JESUS.
THE ANGELIC MESSAGE TO JOSEPH.
THE NAME, JESUS.
THE PROPHECY OF IMMANUEL.
THE BIRTH OF JESUS.
WHO HE WAS BEFORE HE CAME INTO THE WORLD.

Dates.[1]

The Annunciation to Mary, spring of B. C. 5.
The Angel's appearance to Joseph, early summer, B. C. 5.
The Birth of Jesus, probably in December, B. C. 5, four years before our Christian era; for December 25, B. C. 5, is only one week short of January 1, B. C. 4.

Places.

The Announcements, at Nazareth.
The Birth of Jesus, at Bethlehem.

18 ¶ Now the birth of "Jē'sus Chrīst was on this wise: [v] When [as] his mother Mā'rў (was espoused, had been betrothed) to Jō'seph, before they came together she was found with child [w] of the Hō'lў Ghōst.

19 (Then, And) Jō'seph her husband, being a (just *man*, righteous man,) and not willing [x] to make her a (publick, public) example, was minded to put her away privily.

u ver. 1. ch. 16. 21 (mg.). Mark 1. 1. John 1. 17 & 17. 3. Cp. ver. 16. *v* Luke 1. 27. *w* Luke 1. 35. *x* Cp. Deut. 24. 1.

President G. Stanley Hall in a recent lecture said that, calculating in geometrical ratio — two parents, four grandparents, eight great-grandparents — he had 20,000,000 ancestors, counting back to the time of William the Conqueror. The best of all is that we have God himself for our ancestor, as Luke says, "The son of Adam, the son of God."

We can choose what, of all we inherit, we will follow and strengthen. Jesus chose the good and rejected the bad in his inheritance from his human past, and we can do the same. Imperfections in our ancestry do not shut the door of hope.

5. From some names in this list we learn that those who have sinned, and fallen very low, may yet gain the victory, and have part in the coming of the kingdom of God.

18. **When his mother Mary.** — (1) HER NAME. Mary, or Miriam, being the name of the great sister of Moses, was one of the most common of Jewish female names. — *Sadler.*

(2) LINEAGE. Very little is told us of Mary's parentage, but it is continually implied that she was of the royal line of David. She was a kinswoman of Elisabeth, the mother of John the Baptist (1: 36), and she had a sister, Mary, the wife of Clopas (John 19: 25).

(3) HER HOME was in Nazareth of Galilee.

(4) CIRCUMSTANCES. It is implied in the Gospels that she was in humble circumstances; perhaps an orphan, as nothing is said of her family. She was doubtless quite young, as girls were betrothed at an early age. She was betrothed to Joseph, a carpenter of Nazareth. Some think he was a widower, and that "the brethren of the Lord" were his children by a former marriage; others that these brethren were her own children.

(5) APPEARANCE. Tradition, not very well founded, says that Mary was of middle height, fair complexion, blonde hair, light hazel eyes. She was beautiful, without pride, simple, serious, and earnest. She delighted to sing the Psalms of David; and all loved her for her kindness and modesty.

Was espoused. Had been betrothed to Joseph. Betrothal in the East was almost as sacred as marriage itself. The union could be dissolved only by some act of divorce. "Unfaithfulness on the part of the woman was deemed adultery."

Found with child of the Holy Ghost. The details of this event, the annunciation to Mary, and the song of Mary, are recorded in Luke 1: 26–56. The statement is very clear that the father of Jesus was God, and Jesus was in a peculiar manner the Son of God, in both his divine and human nature.

19. **Joseph her husband, being a just man.**

[1] The dates given are those of Andrew's *Life of Christ*, as on the whole the best, but it makes almost no difference in the practical value of the Life of Christ whether that be the exact date, or whether Prof. Ramsay and Mr.

20 But while when he thought on these things, behold, *y* the an angel of the Lord appeared unto him in a dream, saying, Jō'seph, thou son of Dā'vid, fear not to take unto thee Mā'rў thy wife: for that which is conceived in her is of the Hō'lў Ghōst.
21 And she shall bring forth a son; and *z* thou shalt call his name JE'SUS: for it is *a* he that shall save his people from their sins.

y ch. 2. 13, 19. Cp. ch. 2. 12, 22. *z* ver. 25. Luke 1. 31 & 2. 21. *a* Luke 2. 11. Acts 4. 12 & 5. 31 & 13. 23, 38. Cp. Acts 3. 26.

A righteous man, one who wanted to do exactly right. The case was perplexing, and there was a conflict in Joseph's mind as to what was right both for Mary and for the community. A conflict also between love, mercy, and tenderness on the one hand, and justice on the other. As a just and honorable man, he could not take to his home one who had apparently fallen so low; and yet he was *not willing to make her a public example.* His inclination and desire was not to "expose her to public shame;" "he did not wish to compromise her, as would be the result had he given her a letter of divorce."[1]

Was minded. The Greek word denotes not merely intention, but "a carefully weighed self-determination"[1] **to put her away privily,** secretly, "by means of a private interview, without a letter of divorce."[1] Or as others, he would not proceed to a public trial, but secretly give her a writing of divorce to protect her, according to the Jewish law. "There would probably be something so pure, and sweet, and elevated in the character of Mary, that Joseph, even under the influence of irritation and the deepest disappointment, would feel himself unable to entertain the idea of proceeding against her to the utmost extremity of the law. His heart would be filled with mingled surprise, sadness, and compassion."[2]

NOTE. That in full view of this danger of estrangement from her betrothed, and of loss of reputation from her friends, and even of public trial as a criminal, Mary accepted this trust in joyous faith, shows her to be preëminently a heroine of sublime faith and perfect consecration, worthy of the mother of the Saviour,

> "Who above all mothers shone,
> The mother of the Blessed One."

20. **While he thought on these things.** Both justice and wisdom would lead him to do nothing hastily, but to turn the matter over in his mind till he had seen it on all sides, in all its bearings.

The (better "an") **angel of the Lord,** a messenger from God, **appeared unto him in a dream.** "That is, while Joseph was in a state of unconsciousness in relation to the material side of things. Insensibility had barred, for the time being, the gateways that communicated with the outer world, the gateways of his senses; but his mind was inwardly thrown open to spiritual agencies and influences."[2]

Fear not to take unto thee Mary. The angel affirms that Mary's story was true. It would be neither merciful nor just to put her away under these circumstances. Rather his soul should be full of joy.

21. **Thou shalt call his name Jesus,** the Greek form of Joshua, "Salvation of Jehovah." See under verse 1. The people would naturally think of his three great predecessors in their history: (1) Joshua, the glorious leader of the ancient people into the Promised Land and conqueror of their enemies, — a type of Jesus as King and Deliverer. (2) Joshua, the high priest, aided in bringing back the exiles from Babylon and in building the temple and restoring the worship of God. In the vision of Zechariah he was the representative, in filthy garments, of sinning and suffering Israel; but in token of the restoration and redemption of his people God commands him to be clad in clean, rich and splendid robes, and crowned with the priestly mitre, — "a brand plucked from the fire," — a type of the priestly office of cleansing from sin. (3) Hoshea, the original name of Joshua, and the same as Hosea the prophet, means "saving." He was the prophet of grace and salvation from sin through a sad experience of devoted love, foreshadowing the patience and forbearing love of God to sinners, — a type of the prophetic office and work of Jesus.

Shall save his people from their sins, — "from both the *consequences* and the *dominion*, both the *penalty* and the *power*, of their sins. Messiah did not come, as the Jews commonly supposed he would, simply to save his people from the dominion of foreigners; it was something deeper and higher, to save them from their sins. And not to save them *in* their sins, but *from* their sins."[3]

"They cannot save themselves. Once in the

Lewin are right in making it B. C. 6. There are several dates advocated. See Prof. Ramsay's *Was Christ born in Bethlehem?* the article in the Hastings' *Bib. Dic.*, Lewin's *Fasti Sacri*, Prest. Rush Rhees' *Life of Jesus*, Andrew's *Life of Our Lord.*

[1] Meyer. [2] James Morison, D. D.
[3] Prof. J. A. Broadus, D. D.

22 Now [b] all this (was done, is come to pass,) [c] that it might be fulfilled which was spoken (of, by) the Lord (by, through) the prophet, saying,

23 [d] Behold, a (the) virgin shall be with child, and shall bring forth a son, (and, And) they shall call his name [e] Em-man'u-el, Im-man'u-el; which is, being interpreted, [18] God [f] with us.

b ch. 21. 4 & 26. 56. John 19. 36. *c* ch. 2. 15, 23 & 4. 14. Mark 14. 49. John 13. 18, *al.* *d* Cited from Isai. 7. 14. *e* Isai. 8. 8, 10. *f* See ch. 28. 20.

power of their sins they are like Laocoön within the coils of the serpents; their case is hopeless unless a Saviour interpose."[1] The only possible way of saving either individuals or nations is by first saving them from their sins.

His people. All who are saved from sin are his people. All his people are saved from their sins.

From their sins (ἁμαρτιῶν). The word for sin here is akin to a verb which means *missing the mark*, "as a warrior who throws his spear, and fails to strike his adversary, or as a traveller who misses his way (see Homer's *Iliad*, IX. 501; Sophocles, *Œdipus Tyrannus*, 621). In this word, therefore, one of a large group which represent sin under different phases, sin is conceived as *a failing and missing the true end* and scope of our lives, which is God."[2]

22, 23. **All this was done**, rather, has come to pass.

That it might be fulfilled, completely accomplished. **Spoken of**, by, **the Lord**, Jehovah, as the author, **by**, through, **the prophet**, as the means of communication. The prophet was Isaiah (7 : 14).

That, in order that, with this design. The Greek particle (ἵνα) according to the best scholars never means "so that," expressing merely a *result* or *effect*, but "in order that," expressing *design* and purpose, the purpose here being, not that of Joseph, but of God. It was part of God's plan. Certain things were necessary for the salvation of the world. Therefore God planned and purposed them. They were foretold and typified because he had planned them. He guided their fulfilment because they were both what he wanted and what he had foretold.

23. **Behold a virgin shall be with child.** The circumstances of this typical sign are recorded in Isaiah 7 : 1–16. Ahaz, king of Judah, and his kingdom were in sore trouble. The northern kingdom, Israel, and the king of Syria had formed an alliance to stop the inroads of Assyria, and demanded that Ahaz, king of Judah, should join them. Ahaz refused. Then these two northern nations sent their armies like "smoking firebrands" upon Judah, "and the king's heart shook, and the heart of his people, as the trees of the forest shake before the wind." Isaiah, bearing the word of the Lord, bade the king of Judah take heart, for his enemies should be destroyed. And to confirm the king's faith he gives him a sign, that before a young woman could have a child, and the child grow up to know enough to choose between good and evil, — that is, within three years, — both the allied kings they feared would be destroyed. They were, in fact, so destroyed by the Assyrians.

The child was named Immanuel (*God with us*), and was a living proof, a continual sign, a growing sermon to the people, that God was with them in unceasing love and salvation.

But this did not exhaust the meaning even to Judah in Ahaz's time. God was with them all through their history, as he had promised. And this promise was their light and comfort even in their darkest times. "Each victory, each deliverance, prefigured Messiah's work." "It is hardly possible not to connect his name with the child who was to be 'the Wonderful, Counsellor, the Mighty God, the Everlasting Father' of Isai. 9 : 6; with the Rod and Branch of the Stem of Jesse that was to grow up and present the picture of an ideal king (Isai. 11 : 1–9). All that we speak of as the Messianic hopes of the prophet clustered round the child Immanuel."[3]

This Immanuel was the sign and type of a greater Immanuel, who was to bring a greater deliverance, a child born that would forever be the assurance that God is with us; as a dawning ray is the sign and the type of the rising sun, as the bud predicts the flower, and the seed the fruit; the very structure of fruit and flower being discernible in the seed and the bud.

Jesus actually fulfilled this type. He was "the brightness of the Father's glory, the express image of his person;" he expressed God's love and grace and goodness. He was a perfect revelation of God to man.[4] It is not probable that Isaiah saw all that was enfolded in his prediction. But it was there, and God saw it. So we believe in the millennial days and the New Jerusalem; we

> "Clothe the waste with dreams of grain
> And on the midnight sky of rain
> Paint the golden morrow."

But there will be a thousand things fulfilled in

[1] Morison. [2] Prof. M. R. Vincent.
[3] Prof. Philip Schaff, D. D.
[4] See Dr. Van Dyke's *Gospel for an Age of Doubt*, "The Gospel of a Person," and "The Unveiling of the Father."

24 Then And Jō'seph being raised arose from his sleep, and did as the angel of the Lord had bidden commanded him, and took unto him his wife;

25 And and knew her not till she had brought forth her firstborn a son: and *g* he called his name JE'SUS. Je'sus.

g ver. 21.

that day which we cannot see in the promise, nor could we understand them if put into words. But God sees, and will fulfil it to the utmost.

"And God shall make divinely real
The highest forms of thy ideal."

24. **Joseph . . . took unto him his wife.** He sheltered her from suspicion; he showed his perfect confidence in her.

25. **And knew her not.** Showing that not he, but the Holy Spirit, was the father of Jesus.

Brought forth her firstborn son. R. V., brought forth a son; but of course he was her firstborn.

The circumstances of the removal of Mary from Nazareth to Bethlehem the city of David, the manger-cradle, the angel's song, and the visit of the shepherds, are described in Luke 2: 1-20.

WHO JESUS WAS BEFORE HE CAME INTO THIS WORLD.

In order to understand Jesus Christ our Saviour, and the meaning of his coming, we need to know who he was before he came. We learn from John 1: 1-3, and Heb. 1: 2, 3, that he was existent from eternity, that he "was with God, and was God," "the very image of his substance," the Eternal Son of God. By him the worlds were created. From his glorious home he came to this world to reveal to us our Father in heaven, to express his infinite love, to bring us messages of forgiveness and hope, to give his life in atonement for our sins, to redeem the world from sin to holiness and heaven. Nothing better than this has ever been conceived by man.

The Son of God.

The divine nature of Christ is not a mere theory, far away from human life, but is a fact essential to one who would reveal God to men, and be the Saviour of men. He speaks to us from personal knowledge of God, of his love, his care, his readiness to forgive, his nearness to men, his fatherhood. He tells us about heaven and immortal life from his own experience. Only the Son of God could possibly make atonement for sin. Only he could have power to save us at all times and in all places, to be our ever-present friend, our perfect example, our infallible guide.

Practical Value of a divine Saviour.

Only God is wise enough and good enough to save us. Only a divine Saviour can lead to victory over all the forces of evil; only he could make atonement for sin; only he could represent God truly to us; only he be forever before us as our ideal, leading us onward and upward through eternity.

On the other hand, he must be human, in order that he might "be tempted like as we are yet without sin." Thus he reaches down to our human experiences, and we may realize his sympathy and friendship; he must be God visible; he must hold up before us a perfect human example; he must gain the victory in the same battle which we are waging.

The Necessity of a human Saviour.

The top of the ladder of Salvation, like that of Jacob's dream, must reach heaven and God, but the base must be on earth.

If Christ were only divine, we could not realize him. If he were not divine, our love and service of him would lead us away from God, and not towards him.

To love and serve such a leader and Saviour would be idolatry, and lead us away from God, were he not God himself; but now all our love for Jesus is love for God.

The Mystery of the Union of God and Man in One Person, Jesus the Christ. — We cannot explain how this can be, but we can prove that it is possible and reasonable by a similar mystery in ourselves. For each of us is a union of body and soul in one person. This is a fact; but before it became a fact it would seem contradictory and unthinkable that the immaterial spirit should unite with matter, that the two should be distinct, and yet form one person. Every difficulty involved in "God dwelling in the man Christ Jesus," two and yet one person, sometimes spoken of as separate, sometimes as the same, is illustrated in our own persons, and solved there, that being said of the whole which is true only of the soul (as that we are immortal), or again true only of the body (as that we are sick, or die).

CHAPTER 2.

Section III.—The Childhood and Youth of Jesus.

1. Eight Lines of Preparation of the World for the Coming of the Messiah.
2. The Date of the Birth of Jesus.
3. The Visit of the Wise Men.
4. The Star in the East.
5. The Flight into Egypt.
6. The Massacre of The Innocents.
7. The Return to Nazareth.
8. The Home Training of Jesus for His Great Work.

Time.

Birth of Jesus, probably Dec. 25, B. C. 5.
Visit of the Wise Men, Feb. B. C. 4.
Jesus in the temple, his first Passover, Ap. A. D. 9.
Home in Nazareth, B. C. 2, to A. D. 26.

Place.

Born at Bethlehem of Judea.
Home in Nazareth.

Rulers.

Augustus, Emperor of Roman Empire.
Herod the Great, King of Judea under Rome.

1. PREPARATIONS OF THE WORLD FOR THE COMING OF THE MESSIAH.

There has been no other time in the history of the world so perfectly adapted for the beginning of the kingdom, and the spreading of the news of salvation throughout the earth, as that in which Christ was born.

(1) It was after the Jews had received all that they would about God's kingdom, but before the breaking up and scattering of the nation by the fall of their capital and the temple.

(2) There were many lands, but nearly all the world was subject to the one government at Rome, so that the preachers of the gospel could travel in safety, and be protected in their work. Roman roads made for their legions were a highway for the gospel, and the Roman soldiers were a guard for its preachers.[1]

(3) The world was at peace, for almost the only time, so that the gospel could have free course. The doors of the Temple of Janus at Rome were shut.

"No war or battle sound
Was heard the world around."

(4) The Greek language, the most perfect medium of human speech, was spoken everywhere with the native languages, so that the gospel could be heard and read by all. The conquests of Alexander, which diffused the Greek language, the Greek civilization, and Greek learning throughout the East, were a marvellous providential preparation for the gospel.

(5) The Bible of the Jews had been translated into the Greek language in the third century before Christ. This version is called the *Septuagint*. Thus for some centuries the Greek language was being prepared to express the divine message to man.

(6) The Jews had been dispersed through all lands carrying the Old Testament, which bore witness to one God, and held the prophecies of the Messiah. And they had established synagogues in almost every town, so that there was a place in which to preach the gospel, and a people who could easily be reached.

(7) It was a time of great intellectual activity. It was an era of literature and learning.

"Diodorus Siculus, the Greek historian, and Strabo, the Greek geographer (B. C. 54 to A. D. 24), Ovid (B. C. 57 to A. D. 18), Livy (B. C. 59 to A. D. 17), and Seneca (B. C.—to A. D. 65) were living at this time. Horace had been dead three years and Virgil fourteen years."[1]

(8) It was a time when the nations were awakening to their need of a truer religion, a clearer light, a powerful Redeemer from sin. There was despair for their own religions, and an intense desire for something better.

"There was a general disintegration of the old religions which gave neither righteousness nor hope in this world nor promise for the world to come. But nothing could quench the thirst for something higher and better."[2]

The Roman Empire. In order to understand the material on which Christianity had to work, we give the best statistics available. Lyman's tables give the population of the Roman Empire at the time of Christ as 120,000,000, of which 60,000,000 were slaves, 40,000,000 were tributaries and freedmen, and only 20,000,000 were full citizens, or one sixth of the population. The army numbered 400,000, and the navy 50,000

[1] Labberton's *Outlines*.

[2] See Lecky's *History of European Morals*. David R. Breed's *Preparation of the World for Christ* (Revell) is a masterly and interesting presentation of this subject. See, also, Dr. Wenley's book on the same subject.

1 Now when [h] Jē'sus was born in [i] Bĕth'lĕ-hĕm of Jū-dæ'ā [j] in the days of Hĕr'od the king, behold, there came [k] wise men [l] from the east came to Jē-ru'sā-lĕm,

[h] Luke 2. 4–7. [i] Luke 2. 15. John 7. 42. [j] Luke 1. 5. [k] Cp. Jer. 39. 3 (for mg.). [l] Cp. Gen. 25. 6. & 1 Kin. 4. 30.

men. Milman gives the population of Rome, by the census of A. D. 48, at 5,984,000.

PALESTINE. Hon. Selah Merrill, in his *Galilee in the Time of Christ*, thinks that the population of Palestine was about 6,000,000, and of Galilee 2,000,000.

2. DATE OF THE BIRTH OF JESUS.

1. **Now when Jesus was born in Bethlehem.**

Date of Christ's Birth.

The date was four or five years B. C., that is, before the date from which we count the years A. D., Anno Domini, the year of the Lord. It is very perplexing to many to find that Jesus was actually born four years before the time from which we count his birth. The simple reason is that no one calculated dates from the birth of Christ till centuries after he was born, and then Dionysius Exiguus, the monk who published the calculations in A. D. 526, made a mistake of four years. He placed the birth of Christ A. D. in the year of Rome (U. C.) 754. But Herod the Great, who slew the innocents of Bethlehem, died in April of the year of Rome 750; so that Christ must have been born several months before or not later than the last of 749. The following table will help to make the matter clear.

Year of the world (*Anno Mundi* = (A. M.)	4000	4001	4002	4003	4004	4005	4006	4007
Year of Rome (*Urbe Condita*) = U. C.)	749	750	751	752	753	754	755	756
Year of Our Lord	B. C. 5	4	3	2	1	A. D. 1	2	3
Age of Jesus	Born Dec. 25	1st year.	2d year.	3d year.	4th year.	5th year.	6th year.	7th year.

It should be carefully noted that the numbers are *ordinal*, standing for *first*, *second*, etc.

Jesus was probably born at the very close of B. C. 5, which would be only *four* years before our era, for in a week after the 25th of December, B. C. 5, it was January, B. C. 4. He was five years old at the close of A. D. 1.

Bethlehem of Judæa.[1] A village five or six miles south of Jerusalem. Its name, Beth-le-hem ("house of bread"), was due to the fertility of the adjacent cornfields. It was the town of Ruth and Boaz, and was called the city of David because it was his birthplace and contained the records of his family. Here Jerome made the Latin translation of the Bible called the Vulgate, A. D. 370–400. It now contains about 5000 inhabitants. The field of the shepherds was about a mile from the village.

In the days of Herod the king. Herod died April 1, B. C. 4 (Lewin's *Fasti Sacri*), at Jericho, at the age of 70, so that the visit of the wise men must have been a few weeks previous. "This Herod was Herod the Great, founder of the Herodian family. Though aliens by race, the Herods were Jews in faith, and from the time of their conversion remained constant to their new religion."[2] "He possessed energy of character, but an unscrupulous ambition, and was remorselessly cruel. He was made governor of Galilee at the early age of fifteen, and distinguished himself by his campaign against the brigands who infested the mountains. He rebuilt the temple in great magnificence in Jerusalem, which is consequently known in history as Herod's Temple, to distinguish it from Solomon's Temple."[3]

3. VISIT OF THE WISE MEN.

There came, arrived in Palestine. It must have been after the presentation in the Temple, for the family left Bethlehem immediately after the visit of the wise men, and before April, for Herod died April 1. It was probably in February.

Wise men from the east. Magi, sages, "Originally a class of priests among the Persians and Medes, who formed the king's privy council, and who cultivated astrology, medicine, and occult natural science. They are frequently referred to by ancient authors. Herodotus speaks of them as a priestly caste of the Medes, and as interpreters of dreams. Afterwards the term was applied to all Eastern philosophers."[4] "They are men of rank and wealth and learning from the

[1] See Prof. Ramsay's *Was Christ born at Bethlehem?* (Putnams); Mrs. Browning's *Poems*, "The Virgin Mary to the Child Jesus;" Milton's *Poems*, "Hymn to the Nativity;" Phillips Brooks' hymn, "O little town of Bethlehem" and "The earth has grown old with its burden of care;" Dr. Sears's hymn, "It came upon the midnight clear;" *The Christ Child in Art*, by Prof. Henry Van Dyke, D. D.; *The Life of Christ in Art*, by Canon F. W. Farrar.

[2] Smith's *Bib. Dic.* [3] Lyman Abbott. [4] Schaff.

2 Saying, saying, Where is he that is born *m* King of the Jews? for we have seen saw *n* his star in the east, and are come to *o* worship him.

m ch. 27. 11, 37. Jer. 23. 5 & 30. 9. Zech. 9. 9. John 1. 49, *al.* *n* Cp. Num. 24. 17 & Rev. 22. 16. *o* See ch. 8. 2.

far East, representatives of all that is best in the old civilizations of the world."[1] Daniel became president of such an order in Babylon (Dan. 2: 48). The Gospel does not tell how many in number these wise men were, but tradition has made them three, from the number of their gifts, and represents them as kings, — "three kings of the Orient," and named them Melchior, Balthazar, and Caspar.[2]

From the east. The far East, a different word in the Greek from "East" in the next verse. Here it is in the plural, referring to the Eastern regions, probably Persia, since the Magi were the priestly caste of the Zoroastrian religion, the religion of Persia, and hence were not idolaters, but worshippers of the one God under the emblem of fire.

To Jerusalem, the capital of the country, these strangers would naturally come to find the king of the country in the royal palace.

2. **Saying, Where is he that is born King of the Jews?** "This inquiry, more literally translated, is, *Where is the born King;* that is, *the newly-born King of the Jews?*"[3]

Whence arose this Expectation?[4] Without doubt from the Jews, who were scattered everywhere, with their Scriptures and their hopes, since the Babylonish captivity. Daniel himself was a prince, and chief among this very class of wise men. His prophecies were made known to them; and the calculations by which he pointed to the very time when Christ should be born became, through the Book of Daniel, a part of their ancient literature.

"We are informed by Tacitus, by Suetonius, and by Josephus, that there prevailed throughout the entire East, at this time, an intense conviction, derived from ancient prophecies, that erelong a powerful monarch would arise in Judea, and gain dominion over the world."[5] "Virgil, who lived a little before this, owns (Fourth Eclogue) that a child from heaven was looked for, who should restore the golden age, and take away sin."[6] "Confucius had prophesied the appearance of such a deliverer; and a deputation of his followers, going forth in search of him, were the means of introducing Buddhism into China."[7] "But the clearest of all these prophecies was one by Zoroaster. The Nestorians say that Zoroaster was a disciple of Jeremiah, from whom he learned about the Messiah, and taught concerning him to his disciples."[8]

4. THE STAR IN THE EAST.

2. **For we have seen his star in the east.** "Seen by them in the eastern countries, or seen in the eastern sky. The first was certainly the fact, but the second is the probable meaning here."[9] It is natural that a miraculous being should be heralded by a miraculous star. His birth was a miracle; the angels sang at his birth, miracles accompanied his life and crowned his death with the resurrection. It is also natural that nature should show some sign at his birth, as the darkened sun and quaking earth did at his death. **And are come to worship him.** To acknowledge his *worthship;* to do homage to him.

Why should the Star lead them to think of the Messiah? (1) Such appearances were continually regarded by the sages of those days as signs of some great event. (2) The general expectation of the Great King at this time would cause the wise men to think of him when they saw the wonderful star, especially if they connected it with the promised "star out of Jacob" (Num. 24: 17), or thought of the morning star that heralds the dawn. (3) They must have been deeply religious men, God's "outside saints," looking for the hope of the world, listening for the voice of God, "with eyes and hearts set heavenward," watching for the signs and "signallings of Providence." Only to a seeing heart, a soul open to God, would the star have had a meaning. And (4) God may have made some communication to them, as we learn from verse 12 that he actually did afterwards.

The Star in the East. This must have been a supernatural star, some light set in the heavens by God, or some natural phenomenon controlled by God to guide the wise men.

[1] Sadler.

[2] Proctor's *The Universe of Suns*, "The Star in the East." Longfellow's *Poems*, "The Three Kings." *The Wise Men; Who they were*, by Prof. Francis W. Upham. *The Star of the Wise Men*, by Arbp. Trench. *The Other Wise Man*, a reverent and beautiful story, by Prof. Henry Van Dyke. F. W. Robertson's *Sermons*, "The Star in the East."

[3] Morison.

[4] See Trench's *Christ the Desire of all Nations; or, the Unconscious Prophecies of Heathendom*, and the early chapters of Wallace's *Ben-Hur*.

[5] Farrar. [6] Jacobus.

[7] Abbott.

[8] Mrs. Judith S. Grant.

[9] Schaff.

3 When And when Hĕr'od the king had heard these things, it, he was troubled, and all Jĕ-rụ'să-lĕm with him.

4 And when he had gathered gathering together all the chief priests and scribes of the people, together, he demanded inquired of them where [p] the Chrĭst should be born.

p See ch. 1. 17.

There are some very interesting astronomical facts in this connection. New stars suddenly flash out, and then dwindle or disappear. The most noted one is that of the astronomer Tycho Brahe, to whom, as to others, suddenly appeared a radiant fixed star in the constellation *Cassiopeia*, larger than he had ever before seen. For splendor it was only comparable to Venus when nearest to the earth, and was seen by some at noonday. After a few weeks it began to decline, and in sixteen months became invisible to the naked eye. It has since been thought that this star appeared also in 945 and 1264. If it be a variable star with a period of about 431 years, it would make its time of appearance about the beginning of the Christian era.[1]

New Stars.

We learn from astronomical calculations that a remarkable conjunction of the planets of our system took place a short time before the birth of our Lord. In December, 1604, the great astronomer Kepler saw a strange sight in the heavens, — a sight which occurs only once (or rather, is repeated two or three times at one period) in 800 years. It was the conjunction of the bright planets Jupiter and Saturn, close together at one point of the heavens. Five months later, in the following May, the wonder was repeated in a more wonderful way: Mars joined with Jupiter and Saturn, a fiery trygon in the constellation Pisces. The attention of the whole astronomical world was called to the sight; and this seemed to draw notice to another sight, — the appearing of a new star in the constellation of the Serpent. First seen in October, 1604, it grew more and more brilliant, till it glowed like a planet; then its lustre waned, its white light turned to yellow, then to red, grew duller and dimmer, and finally, at the end of two years had vanished altogether. These unusual occurrences led Prof. Kepler, who was as religious as he was scientific, to think that they might help to explain the strange star which the wise men saw in the east. The conjunction could occur but once in 800 years; take twice 800 years, and it brings us to within one or two years of the date of Christ's birth, the *exact* date of which is unknown.

A remarkable Conjunction of Planets.

Several great astronomers, since Kepler's day, have made the same calculations, particularly Prof. Pritchard, of the Royal Astronomical Society, and Encke; and it rests on assured grounds that, about the time of Christ's birth, in the month of May, occurred this conjunction of Jupiter and Saturn, rising about three hours before sunrise, and therefore seen in the east.

Suppose these wise men of Persia, the far East, seeing this wonderful sight in their clear skies, had started on their journey about the end of May, it would require at least seven months. The stars were again in conjunction in September, when the wise men would have reached the nearer East, on the border of the desert. At that time there can be no doubt that Jupiter would present to astronomers a very brilliant spectacle. It was then at its most brilliant apparition, for it was at its nearest approach both to the sun and the earth. The glorious spectacle continued almost unaltered for several days, when the planets again slowly separated, came to a halt, and then Jupiter again approached to a conjunction for the third time with Saturn, just at the time the Magi may be supposed to have entered the holy city, in December. And to complete the fascination of the tale, if they performed the journey from Jerusalem to Bethlehem in the evening, as is implied, then, about half an hour after sunset, the two planets might be seen from Jerusalem, hanging, as it were, in the meridian, and suspended over Bethlehem in the distance. These circumstances would seem to form a remarkable coincidence with the history in our text. The true theory seems to be, that *the expectations of the Magi were aroused by the remarkable conjunction, and their watching was rewarded by the sight of the miraculous star.* This conjunction was a John the Baptist that heralded the true star out of Jacob, miraculously shown in the heavens.[2]

3. **When Herod the king had heard these things.** "The tidings would run like an electric shock through the palace of the usurping Herod."[3] **He was troubled**, agitated, disturbed, lest he should lose his throne and his power. He was old, and feeble, and wicked. His life had been full of crimes. He knew he was hated by his subjects. The least disturbance would inflame his conscience and arouse his fears. **And all Jerusalem with him.** Those in power, officials of Herod, would be afraid of anything that shook the throne. The progress of religion, the coming of Christ, is always a source of trouble to the wicked, for they mean the turning of their world upside down, the dethroning of their idols, the overthrow of their hopes.

4. **And when he had gathered all the chief priests and scribes.** "The chief priests were probably the heads of the twenty-four courses into which the sons of Aaron were divided (2 Chron. 23: 8; Luke 1: 5), but the term may have included those who had, though only for a time, held the office of high priest. The 'scribes' were the interpreters of the law, casuists, and collectors of the traditions of the elders, for the most part Pharisees."[4] **He demanded** (rather, *inquired*) **of them where Christ**, — in the original *The Christ*, not the proper name, but the Messiah, the official title of the promised Deliverer — **should be born.** What do your Scriptures say? What is your expectation?

[1] Condensed from an article by Prof. Wm. W. Payne.
[2] Upham's *The Wise Men; Who they were* (condensed).
[3] Arbp. Trench.
[4] Ellicott.

5 And they said unto him, In Bĕth'lĕ-hĕm of Jū-dæ'à: for thus it is written by the prophet,

6 [q] And thou Bĕth'lĕ-hĕm, [in the] land of [Ju'da, art not the] Ju'dah, Art in no wise least among the princes of [Ju'da: for] Ju'dah: For out of thee shall come forth a [Governor, that] governor, Which shall [r] [rule] be shepherd of my people Ĭs'ra-el.

7 Then Hĕr'od, when he had privily called the wise men, [enquired] and learned of them [diligently] carefully what time the star appeared.

8 And he sent them to Bĕth'lĕ-hĕm, and said, Go and search [diligently for] out carefully concerning the young child; and when ye have found *him*, bring me word, [again,] that I also may come and worship him. [also.]

9 [When] And they, [had] having heard the king, [they departed;] went their way; and, lo, the star, which they saw in the east, went before them, till it came and stood over where the young child was.

10 [When] And when they saw the star, they rejoiced with exceeding great joy.

q Cited from Mic. 5. 2. *r* Ezek. 34. 23. John 21. 15–17. Cp. 2 Sam. 5. 2. & Rev. 7. 17.

5. **And they said**, *i. e.*, the chief priests, etc. "The answer seems to have been given without any hesitation, as a matter perfectly well understood, and settled by divine authority." [1] **Bethlehem of Judæa.** See above. **Thus it is written.** What is quoted in the next verse. **By the prophet** (Micah, in chap. 5: 2). It should be noticed that "by" is literally "through," and that in every case this expression is used. "The ruler to whom Micah alludes is none other than the Messianic King of David's race, so that in the birth of Jesus the prophecy receives its *complete* historical fulfilment." [2]

6. **And thou Bethlehem.** This is quoted freely from the Septuagint (the Greek version of the Old Testament), just as such quotations were popularly made at that time, for there were no Bibles in circulation, and quotations must be made chiefly as remembered from hearing them read. **Bethlehem, in the land of Juda.** In the original there is no *in the*, but the expression is "Bethlehem, land of Juda," as we say, "Chicago, Ill.," or "Newport, R. I." This was to distinguish this Bethlehem from the Bethlehem in the territory of Zebulon, west of the Sea of Galilee.

Princes is, according to a usual figure, put for the towns where the princes, or heads of thousands, lived. **For** gives the reason for the greatness in spite of the insignificance. **Shall come a Governor.** A leader, guide, or ruler. **That shall rule**; or, more correctly, "shall be the shepherd of," including the whole work of the shepherd, guiding, feeding, defending, folding, ruling; a perfect picture of what a good ruler should be to his people.

7. **Then Herod . . . privily** (privately) **called the wise men.** *Privately*, for he was already hatching, still more privately, his malicious plot to destroy Jesus.

Inquired diligently. Learned accurately (ἠκρίβωσε), "from ἄκρον, the highest or farthest point." "The idea is, therefore, he *ascertained to the last point;* denoting the exactness of the information rather than the diligence of the search for it." [3]

What time the star appeared. How long ago, within what time, was the birth of the king made known by the appearing of the star. He would thus learn the age of Jesus.

8. **He sent** (or directed) **them to Bethlehem**, a short six miles from Jerusalem. **Search diligently.** Better, as before, accurately, carefully.

Bring me word . . . worship him. He lied, because if he told his real object, they would of course not report to him. "It was like the kiss of Judas."

9. **Lo, the star**, unexpectedly the star they had seen in the east, appeared to them again, and guided them to Bethlehem, and **stood over where the young child was.**

"Many a starry night I have followed a road leading due south, and over the road hung Betelgeux or Capella (westering with the others), and as I walked, the star 'went before me,' and when I stopped it 'stood' over farmstead or cottage. It was no strain of imagination to say that the star led me on; on the contrary, the optical illusion was so strong that while one was in motion one could scarcely help thinking of the star as advancing just as I myself advanced." [4]

10. **They rejoiced.** Because their journey was now ended, their search was successful, their King was found. Their interpretation of the meaning of the star was correct.

[1] Alexander. [2] Meyer. [3] M. R. Vincent. [4] William Canton in *Expositor*, July, 1899.

11 ¶ And when they were come into the house, they saw the young child with Mā'rў his mother; and they fell down, and worshipped him: and when they had opened their treasures, they presented unto him gifts; gold, and frankincense, and myrrh.

12 And being warned of God in a dream that they should not return to Hĕr'od, they departed into their own country another way.

s Cp. 1 Sam. 9. 7 & Ps. 72. 10. *t* Isai. 60. 6. *u* Rev. 18. 13. *v* Ex. 30. 23. Ps. 45. 8. John 19. 39. *w* ver. 22. Cp. ver. 13, 19. *x* Cp. ch. 27. 19 & Gen. 20. 6 & 31. 11 & Num. 12. 6 & Job. 33. 15.

11. When they were come into the house. This could scarcely have been the stable where our Lord was born. Joseph and Mary remained for forty days in Bethlehem, and would find temporary lodgings. Hence the double blunder of the paintings which represent "the adoration of the Magi" as taking place in the stable while the shepherds were present. **And fell down,** in the Oriental manner of showing homage and worship. **And worshipped him.** "Three acts are here,—*falling down, worshipping, and offering:* the first, the worship of the body; the second, of the soul; the third, of our goods. With these three, our bodies, our souls, our goods, we are to worship him. Without them all, worship is but a lame and maimed sacrifice, neither fit for wise men to give nor Christ to receive."[1]

Opened their treasures. The word points to caskets or chests which they had brought with them. **They presented unto him gifts.** "According to the Oriental custom in paying visits to royalty. Setting forth greater truths than they knew, they offered, to the Son of Man and Son of God, myrrh, hinting at the resurrection of the dead; the royal gold; and frankincense that breathes prayer,—'myrrh to a mortal, gold to a king, frankincense to God.'"[2]

Frankincense. A gum resin, obtained by an incision made in the trunk of a tree of the genus Boswellia. It occurs in commerce in semi-opaque, round, or oblong tears. It is of a yellow or yellowish-brown hue,—the best being almost colorless. Valued for its sweet odor when burned, and used for incense, it was, in olden times, accounted one of the most valuable products of the East.[3]

Myrrh. "An aromatic gum highly prized by the ancients, and used in incense and perfumes. It distils from incisions from a small thorny tree, which grows chiefly in Arabia."[4]

12. Being warned of God. In a dream, in the same manner as God may have spoken to them before. "The verb means, *to give a response to one who asks or consults.* The word therefore implies that the wise men had sought counsel of God."[5] **Into their own country another way.** They could easily go direct from Bethlehem to the Jordan River, leaving Jerusalem to the north and west.

PRACTICAL SUGGESTIONS.

I. Our Stars in the East.—There are many things which become "stars in the east" to lead us to Christ: (1) The star of science, the knowledge of God's works. Nature interprets God to us, and leads us to love and adore him. Many a person has been "led through Nature to Nature's God." (2) The hungers of the soul for love and knowledge, and light and peace, are stars that lead to seek for Jesus and for God. Goethe's dying cry, "More light," is the cry of the soul. (3) The need of forgiveness and reconciliation to God. (4) The need of help in trouble. (5) The hunger of the heart for love. (6) The star of experience of what God has already done for us. (7) The star of hope—for the redemption of ourselves and of the world.[6]

II. Like the wise men, we must look to heaven to be guided rightly on the earth, as ships are guided on the ocean by the sun and stars. The shepherds and the wise men were all guided, the first by a song in the sky, the others by a star.

III. Those who know about Christ should make every effort to find him. It is worth while to travel far and to sell all we have to obtain this pearl of great price.

IV. "Make me, O Lord Jesus, like the Star of Bethlehem, a guiding light to men, that they may find thee and rejoice."[7]

V. A Missing Star. Matthew does not state whether the star was shining all the way, or was seen only at intervals as at the beginning and the end. It certainly was not shining at Jerusalem. A writer makes this use of the latter view: "In a careful reading of the New Testament narrative of the visit of the Magi to the infant Saviour, one fact appears which does not lie on the surface,—the Magi lost their star. It shone out clearly when they started, but presently disappeared; nor did they see it again till their jour-

[1] Dr. Mark Frank in *Christ in Literature.*
[2] Upham, *The Wise Men.*
[3] *Encyclopædia Britannica.*
[4] Lyman Abbott.
[5] M. R. Vincent.
[6] See Whittier's *Poems*, "The Star of Bethlehem." A help to a missionary in Persia from the flower by that name.
[7] Bishop John H. Vincent.

13 And now when they were departed, behold, *y* the an angel of the Lord appeareth to Jō'seph in a dream, saying, Arise and take the young child and his mother, and flee into Ē'gўpt, and be thou there until I bring tell thee: word: for Hĕr'od will seek the young child to destroy him.

y ver. 19. ch. 1. 20. Cp. ver. 12, 22.

ney's end. This loss of the star is a curious and significant fact. It has in it a helpful suggestion for us of to-day in our desert journeys when we have no certain knowledge of the way. At times there comes to us a conviction of duty that blazes in the heavens as the star did for the Magi. Often this is as directly God-given as was the Magi's star. There can be no question about duty then. God's will is plain. Such an occasion comes to every one when he first finds Christ. He should accept his Saviour and follow him wherever he leads. But presently the light is gone; duty is clear no longer; new complications have come, the path is lost. He would follow Christ, but the question is, Where does Christ lead? What is to be done now? Why, exactly what the Magi did. Keep straight on as you were going till some means of taking your bearings and of ascertaining duty is open to you. The desert does not last forever, and the day will come when duty shall be made clear. Then it happens to us just as it did to the Magi, the star blazes out again. A divine assurance fills our soul. There is great joy; and at last we lay our gifts at the feet of our Lord."[1]

VI. "The star could only speak into hearts that were prepared, ears that were trained to listening and interpreting. As the plate of the photographer must first be made sensitive to the light before it can receive and retain the fugitive vision that plays before it, so the hearts of these strangers must have been made sensitive, susceptible to the heavenly vision. That is, there must have been a light in the heart, or the light in the sky had been of no use. Nay, the sky may become one burning star, but if there be no light in the soul, no power of vision, the light itself will be but darkness."[2]

VII. It is not the size of the place, but what is done in the place, that makes it glorious. An insignificant spot has often been the scene of events possessing the greatest importance and the highest moral grandeur. Battles that have changed the history of the world have been fought in small villages. Little Bethlehem became glorious because Christ was born there. Our hearts, too, can become Bethlehems, and be transfigured by the presence of Jesus in them.

VIII. Wicked men are troubled by that which brings hope to the world, — as by revivals, temperance reform, preaching, and whatever interferes with unrighteous gains and pleasures. Here is a test of our character, — whether we rejoice or are troubled at the coming of Christ and his kingdom.

IX. In this story we have "types of four classes of men which exist still; namely, (1) those who earnestly seek the truth; (2) those who rest in the letter of the truth; (3) those who are fearfully alarmed at the truth; and (4) those who are affectionate guardians of the truth. The Magi represent the first, the scribes and Pharisees the second, Herod the third, and Joseph and Mary the fourth."[3]

X. Every one who finds the Lord desires to express his worship and love by giving him precious things.

5. THE FLIGHT INTO EGYPT, 2: 13–15.
February B. C. 4. Immediately after the visit of the Wise Men.

13. **And when they**, the wise men from the East, **were departed.** Returning home, but not by way of Jerusalem as Herod had requested.

The angel. Better an angel, a heavenly messenger. The angels took great interest in the Saviour, and the saving of men.

Take the young child. Mentioned first because the most precious charge, and the one exposed to danger. **Flee,** implying urgent haste. **Into Egypt,** about 300 miles from Jerusalem. The reasons were probably, (1) Egypt was the nearest safe refuge, being wholly independent of Herod, although under the Roman government.

(2) The roads were good and led from Bethlehem directly away from Herod, through a thinly settled and desert country.

(3) There was a large, wealthy, liberal community of Jews there, who could receive and secretly guard the holy family.

"It was almost another Judea, for the favor shown to their race by the Ptolemies had induced as many as a million of Jews to settle in the Nile valley; and of the five quarters of Alexandria, with its 300,000 free citizens, Jews occupied more than two."

Until I bring thee word. Everything was to be done under divine direction, and thus would

[1] Condensed from *The Advance*, May 3, 1894.
[2] Prof. Ernest Burton, in *Expositor*, April, 1895.
[3] Thomas's *Genius of the Gospel.*

14 When And he arose, he and took the young child and his mother by night, and departed into Ē′ġўpt;

15 And and was there until the death of Hĕr′od [z]: that it might be fulfilled which was spoken of by the Lord through the prophet, saying, "Out of Ē′ġўpt have did I called my son.

z See ch. 1. 22. a Cited from Hos. 11. 1.

be done safely and successfully. It was not necessary for Joseph to know the times and seasons, but only that he should commit his ways unto God, who did know.

"I know not the way I am going,
But well do I know my guide."

"I had rather walk in the dark with him
Than walk in the light alone."

Herod will seek . . . to destroy him. To realize the danger, we must recall the horribly cruel and abominable character of Herod. "Deaths by strangulation, deaths by burning, deaths by being cleft asunder, deaths by secret assassination, confessions forced by unutterable torture, acts of insolent and inhuman lust, mark the annals of a reign which was so cruel that, in the energetic language of the Jewish ambassador to the Emperor Augustus, 'the survivors during his lifetime were even more miserable than the sufferers.'" "And, as in the case of Henry VIII., every dark and brutal instinct of his character seemed to acquire fresh intensity as his life drew towards its close." [1]

Macrobius, in his *Saturnalia*, II. 4, reports that the Emperor Augustus said of Herod, "It would be better to be his *sow* than his *son*." [2]

14. **When he arose.** Note the prompt and wise obedience of one who fully trusted the Lord. **He took the young child . . . by night.** Probably the same night, for (1) there was need of great haste. (2) They could thus leave suddenly and unexpectedly, without danger of Herod's discovering where they had gone, or even the fact of their leaving.[3]

The gold given by the wise men may have furnished means for the journey.

Departed into Egypt. According to tradition the place was the town of Mătărī′ĕh, a few miles north of Cairo, and near Lĕŏntŏp′ŏlĭs. Within sight of this place once stood the Egyptian obelisk now in Central Park, New York.

15. **Until the death of Herod.** On the first day of the following April. How long they remained after this is uncertain. **That it might be fulfilled which was spoken of the Lord by the prophet.** The expression would be more literally rendered, *by the Lord through the prophet.* **Out of Egypt have I called my son.** The prophecy here cited is found in Hosea 11: 1. It was originally written of Israel's Exodus from the bondage in Egypt, not as a prophecy but as a historical fact that took place many centuries before, and recounted there as a proof of God's love to his son, Israel. The true Israel, the ideal Israel, who fulfilled the purpose for which the nation was selected and trained by God, was the prototype, the representative of Christ, as we see in Isaiah. So that many things in the history of Israel have their parallel in Christ also, and are applied to him. This explains many of the New Testament applications of Old Testament prophecy.

As to this prophecy, — (1) As Israel was called out of Egypt from exile to enter their promised home, so was Jesus, an exile in Egypt, called away from his exile into his own country. (2) "The Israelites were called out of Egypt chiefly that they might bring with them the real Son of God, the Saviour of the world. This result could not have come to pass if Jesus had remained in Egypt. His coming out of Egypt as a child was a visible type of this spiritual truth." [4] (3) "Nor should we err if we ascribed to them one fulfilment more in the church of the redeemed. Egypt is always represented to us in the Scriptures as a land of darkness, idolatry, slavery, for the body and the spirit, — a type and symbol of the world. What wonder, then, that when God calls from darkness to light, from slavery to freedom, from the worship of idols to the worship

[1] Farrar. [2] Morison.

[3] The famous French picture of this scene, called the Repose in Egypt, represents a sphinx with upturned face, as if still asking the great questions of life; and appropriately standing on the edge of the African desert, to represent the desert state of the world, without God and immortality. Darkness broods over the scene, with only the far-off stars of tradition and philosophy shedding their dim light upon the dark desert of life. The artist represents Mary, with the child Jesus, in their flight from Herod, as reposing between the arms of the sphinx, with Joseph, and the ass near by on an oasis. The light of the picture radiates from the child Jesus, and makes bright the oasis and the nearer sands; and rays from his face stretch far away over the barren wastes, and penetrate through the darkness. So indeed does Jesus shine upon this dark world of sin and sickness and death.

[4] Morison.

16 ¶ Then Hĕr′od, when he saw that he was mocked of the wise men, was exceeding wroth, and sent forth, and slew all the (male) children that were in Bĕth′lĕ-hĕm, and in all the (coasts, borders) thereof, from two years old and under, according to the time which he had (diligently enquired, carefully learned) of the wise men.

17 [b] Then was fulfilled that which was spoken by (Jer-e-my, Jer-e-mi′ah) the prophet, saying,

18 [c] In Ra′ma was there a voice heard, lamentation, and weeping, (A voice was heard in Ra′mah, Weeping) and great mourning, Rā′chel weeping (for, for) her children; (and, And she) would not be comforted, because they [d] are not.

b ch. 27. 9. Cp. ch. 1. 22. *c* Cited from Jer. 31. 15. *d* Gen. 37. 30 & 42. 13, 36. Lam. 5. 7.

of himself, it should be styled a calling out of Egypt?"[1]

6. THE MASSACRE OF THE INNOCENTS, 2. 16–18.

16. **When he saw that he was mocked.** Made a fool of (Meyer), outwitted (Lange). **Was exceeding wroth.** Angry beyond all bounds, in a rage. **Slew all the children that were in Bethlehem.** *All the boys;* for so the original means, being in the masculine gender. "Herod's object was to destroy the lately born King of the Jews; and hence he did not need to kill any but the male children." The population of Bethlehem could hardly have been more than 2000, and the number of boys under two years of age in that number would be between 20 and 30.

In all the coasts, borders, neighborhood.

From two years old and under. So as to include the outside limit of the time when the star appeared in the east.

17. **Then was fulfilled that which was spoken by Jeremy,** Greek form of *Jeremiah* (31 : 15).

18. **In Rama** (Ramah) **was there a voice heard.** The inhabitants of Jerusalem and Judah, before being finally carried off to Babylon by Nebuzaradan, B. C. 586, were collected together in chains at Ramah (five miles north of Jerusalem) and thence they were carried away captive, in gangs" (Jer. 40 : 1). "No doubt there was there a cruel massacre of those who were too young, or otherwise unfit for the journey."[2] Rachel was buried not far from Bethlehem, eight or nine miles from Ramah, and yet she is pictured by a metaphor as weeping for her descendants with so intense a wail of sorrow that it could be heard even in Ramah. Now again she weeps with equal bitterness over those slain at Bethlehem. The one sorrow is the type and expression of the other. In both cases the massacre was an attempt to destroy the nation.

NOTE 1. "The fate of these few infants is a strange one. In their brief lives they have won immortal fame. They died for the Christ whom they never knew. These lambs were slain for the sake of the Lamb who lived while they died, that by his death they might live forever. These

> 'Little flowers of martyrdom,
> Roses by the whirlwind shorn,'

head the long procession of martyrs, if not in intent, yet in fact; and, we may be sure, are now among the palm-bearing crowd, 'being the first fruits to God and the Lamb.'"[3, 4]

NOTE 2. "Herod dies, but the young child whom he tried to slay lives. A heathen emperor of Rome, at the close of a persecution, erected a pillar inscribed, 'In honor of the emperor who extirpated the Christian superstition.' The pillar and the emperor are both gone, but the gospel lives."[5] "The first skirmish gives promise where the victory will lie in the final battle."[6]

> "Truth forever on the scaffold, wrong forever on the throne:
> Yet that scaffold sways the future, and, behind the dim unknown,
> Standeth God within the shadow, keeping watch above his own."[7]

[1] Trench's *Westminster Sermons.*

[2] Sadler. [3] Maclaren.

[4] "Holman Hunt's magnificent painting, *The Triumph of the Innocents*, is to my mind the most important religious picture of the century."

"The spirits of the murdered children of Bethlehem — not a great multitude, as they are often thoughtlessly depicted, but a little band such as really played in that little village — have followed after Jesus on his flight. . . . The Holy Child looks around, and, seeing the spirits of his playmates, welcomes them with the gladness of a divine sympathy. These children are the first of his glorious band of martyrs, and as they draw near to him the meaning of their martyrdom flashes upon them, and their sorrow is changed into joy. In front floats a trio of perfectly happy spirits, one carrying a censer and singing, the others casting down branches of the palm and the vine. At their feet rolls the river of life, breaking into golden bubbles, in which the glories of the millennium are reflected."

"All mystical, symbolical, visionary! But is it not also true? Think for a moment. It is the religion of Jesus that has transfigured martyrdom and canonized innocence. It is the religion of Jesus that tells us of a heaven which is full of children." — Henry Van Dyke, *The Christ-Child in Art.*

[5] J. L. Hurlbut, D. D.

[6] Bishop Hurst, D. D. [7] James Russell Lowell.

19 ¶ But when Hĕr′od was dead, behold, an angel of the Lord appeareth in a dream to Jō′ṣeph in Ē′ġўpt,

20 saying, Arise and take the young child and his mother, and go into the land of Ĭṣ′rą-el: for [e] they are dead (which sought) the young child's life.

21 And he arose and took the young child and his mother, and came into the land of Ĭṣ′rą-el.

22 But when he heard that Är-chĕ-lā′us (did reign in) was reigning over Jū-dæ′ą in the room of his father Hĕr′od, he was afraid to go thither; notwithstanding, [f] being warned (of God) of God in a dream, he (turned aside) withdrew into the parts of Gą̆l′ĭ-lee:

23 And he came and dwelt in a city called [g] Năz′ą-rĕth: [h] that it might be fulfilled which was spoken by the prophets, (He shall) that he should be called a Năz′ą-rēne.

e Cp. Ex. 4. 19. *f* See ver. 12. *g* ch. 4. 13. Mark 1. 9. Luke 1. 26 & 2. 39 & 4. 16. John 1. 45. Acts 10. 38, *al.* *h* See ch. 1. 22.

7. THE RETURN TO NAZARETH, 2 : 19-23.

19. **When Herod was dead.** Only a few weeks after the flight into Egypt. "Herod died at Jericho 7 to 14 days before the Passover (April 12) in the year 750 after the building of Rome, four years before the date from which we reckon our time. An eclipse of the moon which occurred about the same time fixes the date."[1] (See the horrible description of his living death in Jos. *Ant.* XVII., p. 6, v. 5.) He was buried within the bounds of Bethlehem, where he had murdered the innocent children. **An angel of the Lord appeareth in a dream.** The permission to return came in the same manner as the previous warning to depart.

20. **Saying, Arise.** How long this was after the death of Herod is unknown.

21. **Came into the land of Israel,** intending, as is plain from what follows, to return to Bethlehem of Judea, there, no doubt, to rear the Infant King, as at his own royal city, until the time should come when they would expect him to occupy Jerusalem, "the city of the Great King."[2] He would naturally reach Judea first in his journey.

22. **When he heard that Archelaus did reign in Judæa.** Archelaus was Herod's son, and was appointed by Herod's will king of Judea, Idumea, and Samaria. But the emperor gave him only the title of *ethnarch*, a viceroy, governor of a people. "The revenue of Archelaus was 600 talents, about a million dollars. He began his rule by crushing all resistance by the wholesale slaughter of his opponents. But he far surpassed his father in cruelty, oppression, luxury, the grossest egotism, and the lowest sensuality, and that without possessing the talent or the energy of Herod."[3] **He was afraid to go thither,** as well he might be, knowing the character of the new ruler. **He turned aside,** withdrew, took another road. **The parts of Galilee:** *i. e.*, the country itself, the northernmost province of Palestine.

23. **He came and dwelt in a city.** A small town, or large village. It was his former home. **Called Nazareth** (*shoot*, or *branch*, or *protectress*). Nazareth is 20 miles east of the Mediterranean, and 16 west of the Sea of Galilee, and 66 miles in a straight line north of Jerusalem. The modern Nazareth is one of the better class of Eastern villages, and has a population of three or four thousand. Within a year or two it has had a telegraph office, by order of the Sultan. Here Jesus spent more than 28 years of his life, — his childhood, youth, and early manhood.

That it might be fulfilled. It was God's plan irrespective of Joseph's design.

Spoken by the prophets. "Note the plural, as indicating not any one prediction in particular, but a summary of the import of several prophetic statements, such as Ps. 22: 6, 8; 69: 11, 19; Isai. 53: 2–4."[4]

He shall be called a Nazarene. Not "Nazarite," as John was (Luke 1 : 15). Comp. Num. 6 : 1–8, where a different word is used. The prediction was fulfilled in two ways:

(1) It refers to his humble origin and position and insignificance among the powers that controlled the world, as a little twig or shoot in a great forest. The name Nazareth means in Hebrew, a *sprout* or *shoot*, or *twig*, in contrast with a great tree. The town was always lowly and insignificant. "As David sprang from the humble family of Jesse, so the Messiah, the second David, shall arise out of great humiliation (see Isai. 53 : 2, etc.). The fact that Jesus grew up at Nazareth was a sufficient reason for his being despised ('Can any good thing come out of Nazareth?'). He was not a lofty branch in the summit of a stately tree; not a recognized and honored son of the royal

[1] Edersheim. [2] Jamieson, Faussett & Brown. [3] Edersheim. [4] M. R. Vincent.

house of David, now fallen, but an insignificant *sprout* from the roots of Jesse, a Nazarene, an upstart Sprout-town." [1]

(2) Jesus was "the Branch," "the shoot" of Isai. 11: 1-16, and by his Nazareth ("Branch") name fulfilled this prediction. Though of lowly origin, the small, despised shoot will become a great tree. The Jewish nation were cut down by the exile, so that there remained but, as it were, a mere stump of a nation, instead of a beautiful and flourishing tree. But they were cut down not like a fir tree as Assyria was (Isai. 10 : 33, 34), from which no shoots spring up, and the destruction is without remedy ; but as an oak, or chestnut, from whose stumps spring up new shoots which often flourish far beyond the original in

Carpenter's Shop at Nazareth. (*From an original Photograph.*)

size and beauty. Thus the Jewish nation sprang up again after the exile. Thus it was foretold that Messiah was the new shoot, springing up from the decadent Jewish nation representing the kingdom of God, through which that kingdom should grow into a noble tree, far exceeding in splendor and glory and blessing the original tree from whose stump it sprang.

8. THE HOME TRAINING OF JESUS FOR HIS GREAT WORK.

Jesus lived at Nazareth, after he was one or two years old, through his youth and young manhood till he was about 30 years old. He was at home with Joseph and Mary. During this time it is probable that Joseph died, as no mention is made of him with Mary during the ministry of Jesus, and she was committed to John's care at the crucifixion. So that Jesus probably cared for his mother during his early manhood.

From various sources we learn something of the influences around Jesus during his youth, and the kind of boy he grew up to be amid them. Here are two portraits of him from Luke.

And the child grew, and waxed strong, filled with wisdom : and the grace of God was upon him.

And Jesus advanced in wisdom and stature, and in favour with God and men.

"The great Erasmus once wrote a piece in Latin for a boy to speak : 'We boys commemorate the boy — *pueri puerum* — we commemorate our Master Jesus, the chief ideal of all, but yet particularly the chief of us — that is, of boys.'" [2]

His early life brings a message to the young people of to-day.

I. His Nazareth Home. "The houses are of white limestone, prettily situated among fig trees and olive trees, while down below in the valley are gardens in the midst of which is the Fountain of the Virgin from which Nazareth derives its water, and whither doubtless Mary frequently went to obtain water for her household."

"The hill on the northwest rises about five hundred feet above the valley."

Stapfer says, "We cannot credit more than fifteen hundred or two thousand inhabitants to a village which had only one synagogue, one fountain, and one public square." [3] On the other hand, Hon. Selah Merrill regards Nazareth as a city of fifteen or twenty thousand inhabitants.[4]

"The House is low and square, with a court before it, and a terrace on the roof. The door is wide, for light and air, but there are no windows. There are no tables, but there are rugs. There is only one room, for all purposes. Here Joseph works at his carpenter's trade. Here all sleep and eat, except in the summer, when on clear starlight nights all sleep on the roof, each rolled in a blanket. The house is built of sun-dried clay, with an outer stairway. The furnishings consist of a carpenter's bench like our own, and its tools ; [5] a kitchen furnace with two places ; a sheet of iron for roasting wheat or baking bread ; a few leathern bottles, some goblets and cups. They have no plates, or forks, or spoons. Their beds are mere pallets, rolled up every morning. A few mats, and cushions, and a great chest complete the furniture." [6]

II. His Home Training must have been in a most spiritual atmosphere, full of love and piety and good morals. The star of Bethlehem for the human race stands over the home. "I agree with

[1] M. R. Vincent in *Word Studies*.

[2] Phillips Brooks, *Sermons*, "The Beautiful Gate of the Temple."

[3] *Jesus Christ before his Ministry*.

[4] *Galilee in the Time of Christ*.

[5] In the Naples Museum are some of the carpenter's tools from Pompeii, preserved from within a half century of Christ, which closely resemble some of the carpenters' tools of to-day.

[6] *Jesus Christ before his Ministry*.

Helvetius, the child should be educated from its birth; but how? — there is the rub: send him to school forthwith! Certainly, he is at school already with the two great teachers, Nature and Love." The atmosphere of the home is the most potent of home influences. It is the sum of them all. Stapfer says, "Very early Jesus knew by heart certain verses of the Bible. First of all, Deut. 6: 4, 5; 7: 7. . . . After a while his mother put into his hands strips of parchment upon which were written the words he knew by heart. Thus he finally came to know his letters," and to read. "She taught him all the marvellous stories of the Old Testament. The commandments of Jehovah, his promises, his warnings, were graven on his mind in ineffaceable characters."

III. His School Training. When Jesus was six years old his parents sent him to school, in the audience room of the synagogue, which was the schoolroom during the week. He learned to read and write. He probably knew three languages: Hebrew, Greek, and Aramaic, an allied form of the Hebrew, which was the common language of Palestine in that day. The principal schoolbook was the Old Testament, with the comments of the Rabbis.

IV. The Training of his Village Life. Lange says that it was "the master stroke of divine wisdom" which caused Jesus to be brought up in Nazareth. "It is quite noteworthy how many of the strongest, greatest, and most prominent men in the cities were brought up in the country. Yet this is not the complete picture. Jesus came in contact with busy life, with bad men, with unjust dealers in his trade. For Nazareth was a notoriously wicked town." And rumors of the scandal and sin of the empire entered Palestine close to Nazareth along the great roads running through Galilee. "The perfection of his purity and patience was achieved not easily, as behind a wide fence which shut the world out, but amid rumor and scandal, with every provocation to unlawful curiosity and premature ambition." "The chief lesson which Nazareth teaches us is the possibility of a pure home and a spotless youth in the very face of the evil world."[1]

Plato says, "The child is a charioteer driving two steeds up the long life hill; one steed is white, representing our best impulses; one steed is dark, standing for our worst passions." Jesus had to choose between these, exactly as every child must choose, with a choice on which depends the eternal destiny.

V. Jesus never permitted Nazareth to give the Measure of his Life. "Thirty years he lived there, and there was matured the largest, freest human character the world ever saw." "The one man upon whom there are no limitations whatever of race, of circumstances, or of character, was a villager who toiled for bread. There is the conclusive answer for all time to the objection that it is impossible to live a large life under narrow circumstances." How did he do it? (1) By doing even the smallest acts with the greatest motives. (2) By his consciousness of divine sonship and fellowship with God. (3) By keeping his sympathies world wide. Missionary interests are broadening.[2]

VI. The Training of the Carpenter's Shop. Jesus learned the trade of a carpenter from his father (Matt. 13: 55; Mark 6: 1-3). "There is a beautiful tradition that Joseph, his reputed father, died while Jesus was a child, and so he worked not merely to earn his own living, but to keep the little home together in Nazareth, and Mary and the younger members of the family depended upon his toil." "The man Jesus rose at daybreak, and, picking up his tools, made yokes and tables for something to eat." "Jesus never did a piece of shoddy work, or God could not have said of his Son, 'I am well pleased.'" "In that carpenter's shop he fought many battles with subtle forms of temptation that beset mankind."[3]

The carpenter's shop in the home was "the seed plot of the manly virtues." In that school may be learned nearly all the virtues, when the smallest acts are done with the highest motives, love, faith, truth. The spiritual motive transfigures the lowliest toil. It is well that our Saviour was a laborer. Daily work is one of the great schools in which we learn life's best lessons, — skill, faithfulness, honesty, self-denial. Educators are coming to believe that hand work is a necessary part of the best education.[4]

VII. Nature Study. "The natural scenery around Nazareth is said to be among the most beautiful on the face of the earth."[5] Jesus' preaching is full of allusions to nature, and illustrations drawn from nature. He must have watched with close attention the works of his Heavenly Father.

VIII. The National Tendencies. *First.*

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[1] George Adam Smith, *Historical Geography of the Holy Land.*

[2] Condensed from Dr. C. I. Scofield.

[3] G. Campbell Morgan, *The Hidden Years at Nazareth.*

[4] Gannett's *Blessed be Drudgery* is capital. See Murillo's picture (Louvre) of *The Angels in the Kitchen.* See, also, Dr. Van Dyke's *Poems*, "The Toiling of Felix," a legend on a new saying of Jesus to Felix, who sought long to find Jesus.

"Raise the stone, and thou shalt find me;
Cleave the wood, and there am I."

Pictures. *Christ Among the Doctors*, Hofmann, Hunt, Dobson; *Childhood of Christ, Carpenter's Shop at Nazareth*, Hofmann; *The Carpenter's Shop*, Millais; *The Shadow of Death*, Holman Hunt.

[5] Stalker.

The Roman dominion was irksome and galling. The people of God were subject to a foreign yoke. The taxes were heavy. Roman soldiers, laws, money, ever reminded them of their subjection, when they ought to be free and themselves the rulers of the world. When Jesus was ten years old there was a great insurrection (Acts 5 : 37) in Galilee. He who was to be King of the Jews heard and felt all this, and was filled with patriotic impulses.

Second. The Jewish hopes of a Redeemer, of throwing off their bondage, of becoming the glorious nation promised in the prophets, were in the very air he breathed.

IX. Training from Travel and Great Religious Meetings. In Luke one incident of these years is preserved for us. At twelve years of age Jesus began his annual journeys to Jerusalem, and his attendance at the great religious festivals. It is hard to realize now the great educational value and the spiritual inspiration of these vacation experiences in a time when there was little communication between different parts of the country.

X. The Book of History lay open before him. The scenes of a large portion of the heroic deeds of his nation, the victories and the defeats, the struggles for freedom, and the punishments for sin, were spread out before him, from the hills back of the city, whither he would make many boyish excursions. As Edersheim says, "There could not be a national history, nor even romance, to compare with that by which a Jewish mother might hold her child entranced."

XI. Communion with God. The silent meditations, the hidden years, like those of Moses in the wilderness, the lonely wrestlings with life's problems, like Jacob's at the brook Jabbok, the sweet hours of prayer, the opening of the soul to the divine influences, — were all needful to his growth in wisdom, and for his preparation for his life's work.

CHAPTER 3.

Section IV. — JOHN THE BAPTIST AND HIS MISSION. 3: 1-12.

1. The Hidden Years of John.
2. Preaching in the Wilderness.
3. How He prepared the Way for Jesus.

Time.

John began to preach in the summer of A. D. 26. He preached six months alone, then a year and three months coincident with Christ till March, A. D. 28.

Place.

The Wilderness of Judea.

John about 30 years old when he began to preach.

Jesus between 29 and 30 years old, still at Nazareth.

Rulers.

Tiberius Cæsar, Emperor of Rome; John's preaching began in his thirteenth year as sole ruler; Pontius Pilate, Governor of Judea (first year); Herod Antipas, of Galilee and Perea (thirtieth); Herod Philip, of Trachonitis, Idumea, and the northern regions beyond Jordan.

1. THE HIDDEN YEARS OF JOHN.

Time. B. C. 5 to A. D. 26.

Place. Hebron and the Wilderness of Judea.

John the Baptist was born in the summer of B. C. 5, about six months before Jesus, in the hill country of Judea. His parents were the priest Zacharias and his wife Elisabeth, the cousin of Mary; so that Jesus and John were second cousins. John was the child of prayer and of prophecy. He was a Nazarite, drinking "neither wine nor strong drink," and was filled with the Holy Spirit from his birth (Luke 1 : 15).

The history of his first thirty years is recorded in one verse (Luke 1 : 80). He grew in his bodily development, and waxed (grew) strong in spirit, in character, in knowledge, in devotion, in spiritual insight, in firmness of will. All this time he was in the deserts, not sandy wastes, but sparsely inhabited, wild, uncultivated regions, probably not far from his "hill country" home.

Compare the forty years which Moses spent in the desert before he entered upon his great work, and the long period of Elijah's youth before he suddenly appeared to King Ahab.

The object of this long period of retirement seems to have been (1) to prevent John from being under the influence of the pervading false idea in reference to the Messiah. (2) That he might have long and deep communion with God, both in nature and in revelation, and be filled with his Spirit. As astronomers now discover stars invisible even through the telescope, by placing in it highly sensitive photographic paper exposed

1 [i] In / And in those days came / cometh [j] Jŏhn the Băp′tĭst, preaching [k] in the wilderness of
Jū-dæ′ȧ,
2 And saying, [l] Repent ye; for [m] the kingdom of heaven is at hand.
3 For this is he that was spoken of by the prophet E-sa′ias, / I-sa′iah the prophet, saying, [n] The voice of one
crying in the wilderness, [o] Prepare / Make ye ready the way of the Lord, make / Make his paths
straight.

i For vers. 1–12, see Mark 1. 2–8 & Luke 3. 2–17. *j* John 1. 6, 7. *k* Josh. 15. 61. Cp. Judg. 1. 16. *l* ch. 4. 17. Mark 1. 15. *m* ch. 10. 7. Dan. 2. 44. Cp. ch. 6. 10. *n* John 1. 23. Cited from Isai. 40. 3. *o* Luke 1. 76.

in perfect stillness for a long time, till the image of the starry heavens is impressed thereon, so in silence and alone great truths of the kingdom of heaven were written on the prophet's soul.

> "In youth, beside the lonely sea,
> Voices and visions came to me;
> In every wind I felt the stir
> Of some celestial messenger."[1]

(3) From without he could best see the condition of the nation, could study its hopes, understand its sins and dangers, and learn the way by which alone it could be saved. These thoughts burned within his soul like the fires in the heart of a volcano, till when the hour came they suddenly burst forth as in a lava stream of fire.[2]

2. JOHN THE BAPTIST PREACHING IN THE WILDERNESS, vers. 1–3.

TIME. Summer of A. D. 26.

PLACE. The Wilderness of Judea.

PARALLELS. Mark 1:1–3; Luke 3:1–6.

1. **In those days.** While Jesus was still living at Nazareth, about twenty-eight years after he came there as a child. The time is given more exactly in Luke, in the fifteenth year of the reign of Tiberius Cæsar, or his thirteenth as sole ruler. He reigned two years in conjunction with Augustus.

John the Baptist. So called because he baptized those who repented and confessed their sins. Baptism was the most characteristic public feature of his work. (See below on ver. 6.)

Preaching (κηρύσσων, from a noun meaning *a herald*), proclaiming after the manner of a herald, who is vested with public authority to convey messages or commands from a king or general.

In the wilderness of Judæa, not a desert, but wild, uninhabited, unappropriated land of the lower Jordan valley, and extending west of the Dead Sea, belonging to the territory of Judea.

2. **Saying, Repent ye** (Μετανοεῖτε). The Greek word is compounded of a preposition with two meanings, *after* and *with*, and a verb meaning *to perceive*, and *to think* as the result of perceiving. Hence the meaning *to think after* a deed is done, and *to think with*, in comparison with what ought to have been done, or might have been done, and so *to think differently after*. It is *a change of mind resulting in a change of conduct*. The emphasis is on the change of mind and heart, rather than on the sorrow which is the impulse that leads to the change of conduct.

For, giving the special reason for proclaiming repentance at this time. Sin always demands repentance, but now (1) a new era was at hand when repentance would accomplish more than at any other time, just as the approach of spring gives a new reason for sowing seed; and (2) because there were at hand new aids to repentance, new inspirations, new motives, which made it easier to repent.

The kingdom of heaven. That condition of things where God is the real King, the laws are those of heaven, the spirit of its members is that of heaven. It is the rule of God on earth as he rules in heaven. It has its organizations and visible membership, but the kingdom is far larger. "Its origin is in heaven; its end is in heaven; its King is heavenly all over; its subjects are heavenly in character and destiny; its laws are heavenly; its privileges are heavenly; its institutions are heavenly; its own culmination is in heaven, and is indeed heaven; its institutions on earth are earnests of the glory of heaven. Thus the kingdom *on* earth and the kingdom *in* heaven are one, the one kingdom *of* heaven."[3]

Is at hand in the person of Christ its King, who had come to inaugurate the kingdom, to give the light, the motives, the teachings, the message of love from God, to make the atonement necessary for its coming.

3. **For this is he**, the words of Matthew not of John.

By the prophet Esaias. Greek form of Isaiah. The words are found in Isai. 40:3–5, quoted from the Septuagint, the Greek translation in common use at that time.

The historic type.

The message that follows was primarily spoken of the exiles in Babylon, who were nationally in a wilderness; and a real wilderness lay between them and their own country. The time had come for the exile to end, and for the Jews to return and rebuild

[1] T. B. Aldrich, *Sea Longings*.

[2] See a highly appreciative notice of John the Baptist by Josephus, *Antiquities*, 18:5:2.

[3] Morison.

their capital city and the temple, which had long lain waste. Then came a voice, not a person, but an unseen call, an inspiration and impulse throughout the exiled peoples, as we speak of the voice of Spring calling to the seeds and roots to awake into life and activity.

It was the voice of God spoken (1) through his providence ; for the nation that exiled the Jews was overthrown, and a new kingdom with different principles and policies took its place.

(2) Through the heathen leaders, as Cyrus, making them see that it was better for them and their nation to restore the Jews, as a defence against Egypt. There may have been also a more direct communication to Cyrus.

(3) Through the Jews themselves in a long and widely diffused influence, touching their conscience through their sufferings for their sins, and their hearts with an intense longing for deliverance and religious life.

(4) Through the voice of the prophets, especially as recorded in the last part of Isaiah, calling, entreating, warning, promising, awakening in them repentance for the past, and new life, new desires, new hopes, new love.

John fulfilled all this spiritually. He did for the Jews, and for the world in spiritual exile, what this voice did for the exiles six centuries before. This was the great spiritual reality of which the return from the exile was a type and visible expression.

The voice of one crying in the wilderness. John is called "a voice," because : (1) He was the utterer of God's thought. (2) "The whole man was a sermon ; " his whole personality spoke. (3) Because the emphasis and importance lay chiefly in the message, not in the messenger ; the man was in the background. (4) Himself weak and insignificant, like a breath, a mere vibration of air, he yet produced a mighty effect on the souls of men.

Prepare ye the way of the Lord. "In the mountain regions, the washing of the hillsides by the heavy winter rains destroys each year a large portion of the best-laid roads. In the desert regions the shifting sands, and in the more fertile regions the abundant growth of weeds and shrubbery, make Eastern roads well-nigh impassable, unless care is exercised for their frequent or special clearing. In many parts of the East the ancient roads were prepared or repaired only at the special call of the king, for his special service on an exceptional occasion." [1]

On the 1st of April, 1886, the boy Emperor of China set out on his first journey beyond the confines of Peking, to visit the Eastern tombs, fifteen miles away, to worship his imperial ancestors. "For weeks before the eventful day, hundreds of men had been at work preparing a road for His Majesty to travel." [2]

"On going from Cairo to the Pyramids, over an exceptionally good road, the traveller will not fail to be told that it was built for the Prince of Wales, or for the Empress Eugenie, or for the Khedive himself, or even, rarely, for Napoleon the Great." [3]

The best roads now in Palestine were prepared for the Prince of Wales in his late visit to Jerusalem.

Make his paths straight, so that the Great King with all his retinue may travel easily over them, to overcome his enemies, and bless his people even to the uttermost bounds of his kingdom. Wherever the conquering Romans went, they built good roads for military and governmental purposes. They are now all over Europe.

The description is fuller in Isaiah and in Luke.

The Need of Preparation. The way for the coming of the kingdom of God was full of obstacles of every kind, — the military power of the Romans which had conquered the world ; the throne of the emperor who was worshipped as God ; the crimes and sins intrenched in customs, fashion, wealth, and the very structure of society ; the pride, the learning, the prejudices of the whole Jewish nation ; all the sins, and evils, and selfishness of the human heart.[4] And still every unregenerate human heart is a wilderness abounding in obstacles to the coming of its king. There is need of reformations and revivals, political and religious, which stir the community to its very depths, and throughout its whole extent. The ordinary means of grace are most important, but there is also need of other and sudden powers to make men see more clearly both their needs and their hopes, and to bring them to action.

Preparing the Way of the Lord. The breaking up of wild ground for cultivation, removing rocks and roots of trees and thorns and weeds, ploughing the ground, are all necessary as preparations for sowing the good seed, without which there can be no harvest. It is useless to sow even the best of seed on snow banks and frozen soil. Every people, every heart, needs a John the Baptist preparing the way of the Lord.

The voice comes to us, "Prepare ye the way of the Lord." (1) Fill up the valleys, the sins of omission, — defects of prayer, of faith, of love, of work. (2) Bring down the mountains of

[1] H. C. Trumbull, LL. D. See his *Studies in Oriental Social Life.*

[2] Mrs. H. P. Beach.

[3] Prof. Isaac H. Hall in *Sunday-School Times.*

[4] On the moral condition of the world at the time of Christ's coming, see Uhlhorn's *Conflict of Christianity with Heathenism*, Prof. Geo. P. Fisher's *The Beginnings of Christianity*, Farrar's story *From Darkness to Dawn*, scenes in the life of Nero. *Ben-Hur* and *Quo Vadis* give vivid pictures of the times.

4 And the same Now John himself had *p* his raiment of camel's hair, and a leathern girdle about his loins; and his meat food was *q* locusts and *r* wild honey.

p 2 Kin. 1. 8. Zech. 13. 4. Cp. Heb. 11. 37. *q* Lev. 11. 22. *r* 1 Sam. 14. 26.

pride, sin, selfishness, unbelief, worldliness. (3) Straighten out all crooked places, crooked dealings with others, crooked ways of sin, settle difficulties, confess sins. (4) Smooth rough places, — harshness of temper and manner, lack of courtesy, coldness, fault-finding, which are the little foxes that spoil the vines, the flies in the precious ointment, the spots in our feasts of charity that mar the beauty of holiness.

3. HOW JOHN PREPARED THE WAY, vers. 4–12.

PARALLELS. Mark 1: 4–8; Luke 3: 7-18.

I. BY HIS MANNER OF COMING; LIKE A PROPHET OF OLDEN TIME. John was the Elijah of the New Dispensation, and he came like Elijah in the suddenness of his coming, and in his general appearance and mode of living.

4. **And the same John** (or *John himself*) **had his raiment of camel's hair.** "Not the elegant kind of cloth made of the fine hair of the camel, which is thence called camlet, but a coarse, rough stuff, manufactured from the long and shaggy hair (shed every year) of those animals." [1] "This raiment of camel's hair was nothing else than that sackcloth of which we read so much in the Scriptures." [2] This coat or mantle is still worn by the Arabs, and is of most admirable material for "keeping out the heat, the cold, and the rain." It is used only by the poorest of the people.

And a leathern girdle about his loins, necessary on account of the loose dress. It was of untanned leather, like that worn by the Bedouin of the present day. This was in contrast with the richly ornamented girdles, often of the greatest richness, embroidered with silver and gold, in which Orientals delight. **His meat was locusts.** The common brown locust is about three inches in length, and the general form is that of a grasshopper.

Locusts have been used as food from the earliest times. "Herodotus speaks of a Libyan nation who dried their locusts in the sun, and ate them with milk. The more common method, however, was to pull off the legs and wings and roast them in an iron dish. Then they were thrown into a bag and eaten like parched corn, each one taking a handful when he chose." They are still eaten by the Bedouins, and by some of our American Indians.

"The Indians of the coast very highly prize the dishes from these insects. They make soup of them first, and finally, when they will no more answer for soup, they are eaten."

Locusts.

"Prof. C. V. Riley, the government entomologist, was found breakfasting on fried cicada, or seventeen-year locusts, the other morning. They resemble fried oysters. 'I spent an hour last night,' said the host, 'gathering them, and they were very beautiful when fresh. I took them just as the pupa began to break. They were creamy-white and plump, and looked good enough to eat raw, but I did n't venture. I think these should have been stewed instead of fried, — stewed in milk. I presume they would be nearly as good as grasshoppers.' 'Do you eat grasshoppers?' 'Certainly. I once ate nothing else for two days, and I found them delicious when properly cooked.'" [3]

Locusts are so abundant in this region that, according to the London *Daily News*, in 1881, 250 tons of locusts were buried in Cyprus, each ton numbering over 90,000,000 of these pests.[4]

Locusts are sold at one cent a pound "in the market-place in Biskra (which is the second oasis from the north in the Sahara), and there they are cooked by boiling with salt and water, as shrimps are boiled here. I myself have little doubt that they are more nutritious than the latter, because in March, when the insect is gathered and dried, it is as full of albumen as an egg." [5]

And wild honey, made by wild bees, and

[1] Dr. Campbell. [2] Bp. Porteus.
[3] Correspondent of the Boston *Journal*.
[4] The *Popular Science Monthly*, xxiii., pp. 531-535, has an excellent article by David A. Lyle, on "Locusts as Food for Man."
[5] London *Daily Graphic*.

5 Then went out (to unto) him Jĕ-rụ′sā-lĕm, and all Jū-dæ′ā, and all the region round about Jôr dạn;

stored in hollow trees or clefts in the rocks. Such honey abounded in Palestine.

Why John lived in this Manner. (1) John's habits were perfectly natural for a poor person living in the wilderness. It required little care or thought, and thus left him free for his great work. (2) The dress was probably deliberately adopted by the Baptist as reviving the outward appearance of Elijah. (See, also, Zech. 13 : 4.)[1] It would thus give him the prestige of a prophet, and power over the people. (3) His manner of living was a protest against the prevalent worldliness as manifested even by the Pharisees with their "long garments" (Mark 12 : 38), and the "gorgeous apparel" of the scribes in the court of Herod (Luke 7 : 25). (4) It would enable him to be perfectly fearless and independent. He had little to lose by opposition of the great, or to gain from their favor. (5) It symbolized the rigor and austerity of the old dispensation ; a fitting garb for those who felt the depths of sin and the danger to which sin had brought the people and the country.

But such a manner of living is not required in other circumstances. Jesus Christ, the ideal man of all ages, did not live in this manner. "Though asceticism be sometimes good, it is consciously not the highest nor the most effective goodness. It is harder to be a holy friend of publicans and sinners, a witness for God while eating and drinking with these, than to remain in the desert undefiled." [2]

II. John prepared the Way by his preaching Repentance unto Remission of Sins, and the approach of the kingdom of heaven (ver. 2. Luke 3 : 3). There was the severest denunciation of sin, and the boldest rebuke of wrongdoing, not from the wish that harm should come upon them, not with the desire of vengeance, but always with the desire that men should repent and be saved from the threatened woes. The one absolutely necessary condition was repentance and forsaking sin. Most of the people were looking for some easier way, as men now wish to go to heaven, but cannot without casting away all that is unheavenly and having the heavenly character formed within them. A king, however mighty, a victory over Roman authority, however great, outward prosperity, however abundant, could never bring the promised blessedness. There was only one way, — Repent.

Therefore, John denounced sin, particular sins ; he showed their evil and their danger. He was personal, direct, and fearless. He was very vivid in his illustrations.

Fire, vipers, winnowing fans, chaff scattered by the winds, trees with the axe laid at their roots, illumined and impressed his teaching.

Everywhere in his preaching there was hope forgiveness, the kingdom of heaven, a new life, a redeemed nation, a Great Deliverer.

Better things were close at hand. The winter was almost over, and "Heaven's Springtime of Glory" was about to burst upon the world.

The things reported were but a portion of John's preaching (Luke 3 : 18).

5. Therefore there **went out to him** the inhabitants of **Jerusalem**, practically the whole city, **and all Judæa**. He did not go to them, they went to him, as the hungry go where there is food, and the cold where there is a fire, and the poor where there is a gold mine, no matter how desert and difficult the place.

What drew these Crowds ? To hear such a man denounce their sins ? (1) The terrible denunciations of sin touched their moral nature and almost fascinated them into listening. Perhaps, feeling guilty, they wanted to hear other men's sins brought to the light. (2) There was always hope with the condemnation. John pointed out a way of escape. It was not the terror of despair, but of urgency to use the means of deliverance. (3) John preached to their needs. He said what they needed, what their souls hungered for in their innermost depths. (4) The earnestness of the preacher who thoroughly believed in what he said. (5) What he preached was true, and they knew it. (6) His courage was sublime, for he condemned to their face the very leaders, the Jewish authorities, even Herod himself, who by his conduct was ruining the nation, was warned to his face (see on 14 : 2–5). John was no respecter of persons, but spoke the truth though it cost him his life. (7) There was a general religious awakening and expectation ; such as drew the wise men from the East. The Roman yoke was very bitter, and the people were hoping for a deliverer, and questioned whether John might be the one.

Thus their personal needs, their patriotism, their interest in the welfare of their country, awakened an interest which prepared their minds to consider the claims of the gospel ; just as now, in our country, the connecting of moral questions with political interests causes multitudes to think about and to discuss the great moral questions of the day, and thus becomes one of the greatest of our educating forces.

III. By the Rite of Baptism, and Public Confession.

[1] Plumptre.

[2] G. A. Chadwick in *Expositor's Bible*.

6 And and they were baptized of him in the river Jôr'dạn, [s] confessing their sins.
7 ¶ But when he saw many of the [t] Phăr'ĭ-sees and [u] Săd'du-çees coming to his baptism, he said unto them, [v] O generation Ye offspring of [w] vipers, who hath warned you to flee from [x] the wrath to come?

s Acts 19. 18. *t* ch. 23. 13, 15. *u* ch. 22. 23. *v* ch. 12. 34 & 23, 33. *w* Ps. 140. 3. *x* Rom. 5. 9. Eph. 5. 6. Col. 3. 6. 1 Thess. 1. 10.

6. And were baptized of him in Jordan. It was necessary that some means should be employed that would bring the people to a clear and public decision. There must be an open and decisive stand, both for the sake of the individual himself and for the public.

Men do not enlist in a war secretly, as if ashamed of their colors. Their banners, their uniform, their associations, all declare where they stand. None are so weak and useless as those who sit on the fence. Those on the border between two warring countries suffer most of all.

"Ablution in the East is of itself almost a religious duty. The dust and heat weigh upon the spirits and heart like a load; its removal is refreshment and happiness. It was, hence, impossible to see a convert go down into a stream, travel-worn and soiled with dust, and in a moment emerge pure and fresh, without feeling that the symbol suited and interpreted a strong craving of the human heart." [1]

Confessing their sins. The very act of baptism was a confession of sins and a promise of repentance, but doubtless they also, as Alford says, made "a particular and individual confession;" not, however, made privately to John, but before the people. No one truly repents who does not also confess, — to God the sins against God, to man the sins against man, ever also making restitution as far as possible.

Value of Confession of Sin. (1) Confession strikes at the root of the matter, showing that we ourselves are to blame for our sins and the sorrows that flow from them. (2) It honors God before men, no longer imputing to him the evils which belong to ourselves. (3) It confirms and strengthens us in our new life. It is a barrier against returning again to sin. Secret religion is like a plant grown in the shadow, never so vigorous or fruitful as that which grows in the open air. (4) It tends also to convict others of sin, and to lead them to repentance. (5) Therefore everything that is noble and honorable in our nature requires us to confess our sins.

IV. By Warnings and Denunciations of Sin, vers. 7-10.

7. When he saw many of the Pharisees and Sadducees. The two leading religious sects of the Jews, including the principal men of the nation. **Come to his baptism.**[2] Why? (1) Drawn by the general interest and excitement. (2) Perhaps to watch what was going on, so as to hinder the work if need be. (3) Possibly with a half-conscious feeling of sin and need. If the new kingdom was coming, they might want chief places in it. They would be baptized (Luke), if by so easy a form they could be partakers in the kingdom. **O generation of vipers.** Progeny, brood of vipers.

"In all the waste places of the East, among the jagged rocks, on the sands, and especially among the ruins of old inhabited places, among the thorns that grow over the stones, the asp and the adder are to be looked out for. A place infested with adders is as deadly and dangerous as can be." [3]

"The most venomous and dangerous of the many poisonous snakes of Syria. It is of small size, gives no warning rattle, and closely resembles the gray rocks where it lives. It darts upon its victim unawares. This treacherous habit of the viper, and the deadly poison of its bite, gave point to the comparison." [4]

They were children, not of Abraham (v. 9), but of "that old serpent the devil," and had the nature of their father.

Who hath warned you to flee from the wrath. They had come to be baptized, not to repent; to go through a form, not to change their natures. Who had told them that the outward form would save them? What had made them think that there was any danger, since they claimed to be so good, and to belong to the people of God? **The wrath to come.** The punishment that must come upon the guilty nation and the sinful individual unless they forsook their sins. (Mal. 3 : 2; 4 : 5; Luke 21 : 5-26; Matt. 22 : 13; Rom. 2 : 9.) The result was as certain as the laws of God. The disease will work death. The fire will burn.

This was not denunciation, but warning. It was the cry of love. Its object was to keep them from suffering the wrath. The "vipers" were a mirror held up before them that they might realize what they really were.

[1] Geikie.

[2] See Robertson's *Sermons*, 1st Series, "The Scribes and Pharisees at the Baptism of John." Very suggestive.

[3] Prof. I. H. Hall.

[4] Dr. E. W. Rice.

8 Bring forth therefore fruits [y] meet for worthy of repentance:
9 And and think not to say within yourselves, [z] We have Ā'bră-hăm to our father: for I say unto you, that God is able of [a] these stones to raise up children unto Ā'bră-hăm.
10 And even now also is the axe is laid unto the root of the trees: therefore [b] every tree which therefore that bringeth not forth good fruit is hewn down, and cast into the fire.
11 [c] I indeed baptize you with water [d] unto repentance: but [e] he that cometh after me is mightier than I, whose shoes I am not worthy to bear: he shall baptize you [f] with the Hō'lў Ghōst and *with* [g] fire:

y Acts 26. 20. *z* John 8. 39. *a* Cp. ch. 4. 3. *b* ch. 7. 19. Luke 13. 7, 9. John 15. 2, 6. *c* John 1. 26. Acts 1. 5. *d* Acts 13. 24 & 19. 4. *e* John 1. 15, 27 & 3. 30, 31. Acts 13. 25. *f* John 1. 33. Acts 11. 16. *g* Cp. Isai. 4. 4 & Mal. 3. 2, 3 & Acts 2. 3.

8. **Bring forth therefore**, if you really wish to be saved, and to escape. If you wish to be baptized. **Fruits meet for repentance.** The fruits that grow out of true repentance, and prove it true, as good fruit proves the tree to be good.

Compare Gal. 5 : 19–24 and Luke 3 : 10–15, where some of these fruits are named, in particular directions to soldiers, taxgatherers, and the people in general.

9. **And think not to say within yourselves**, as your secret hope and confidence. **We have Abraham to** (for) **our father.** We must be saved because we belong to the race of Abraham and the kingdom he founded, and are inheritors of the promises to him and his children, even if we do not repent, and whatever our character. Such hopes, says John, are absolutely vain. You must inherit Abraham's faith and character if you would inherit the promises to Abraham. **God is able of these stones**, "doubtless pointing to the stones that lay on the shore of Jordan, where he was baptizing. May there not be a play on the words *banim* (children), *abanim* (stones)?" [1] **To raise up children unto Abraham.** "God can as easily make sons of stones as of a brood of vipers." [2] Indeed, he did change the stony hearts of publicans and sinners into children of Abraham by faith. (See Ezek. 11 : 19 ; 36 : 26, 27 ; and Gal. 3 : 7–9.) Thus God could fulfil all his promises without having unrepentant and wicked Pharisees in his kingdom.[3]

10. **The axe is laid** (is lying) **unto** (at) **the root of the trees**, all ready to cut them down when the time came. As if a farmer, looking over his orchard, and seeing a tree fruitless or with only poor fruit, should lay his axe at its roots for his servants to cut the tree down. It was laid there as a warning. Hence there was a brief respite, with the possibility of such a change into fruit bearing that the axe need not be used. Compare the parable, Luke 13 : 6–10.

The Jewish church was this tree. The axe was laid at its root. The forces were already in operation which led to the destruction of the Jewish nation 44 years later.[4] The same is true of each individual sinner.

Every tree which bringeth not forth good fruit is hewn down. Because it takes the place of something better. Moreover, in Palestine the fruit trees are all taxed, whether they bear fruit or not. So that a fruitless tree brings its owner into debt. A few years ago, when taxes were heavy and olive products light, multitudes of olive trees were cut down on the spurs of Lebanon to save taxes. New influences or a new graft might make the tree fruitful again, at the cost of cutting off many a limb. But the Jews, as a nation, were not willing to receive the scion that would have saved them.

Wicked men, and their use of ceremonial, their selfish opposition to the principles of the kingdom of God, stood in the way of its coming, and therefore they must be removed.

And cast into the fire, a painful and terrible destruction. It was all they were good for. And thus unwillingly they did a little for the help and improvement of the world.

V. By pointing to the Messiah, ver. 11.

We see more fully in John 1 : 19–37 how John bore witness to Jesus as the Messiah, to the Pharisees, and pointed out Jesus to his disciples as "the Lamb of God which taketh away the sin of the world."

11. **I indeed baptize you with water.** I give

[1] Cambridge Bible.

[2] C. H. Spurgeon.

[3] See Guthrie's *Gospel in Ezekiel*, "The Heart of Stone." Compare Shakespeare's *Julius Cæsar* : —

"There were an Antony
Would ruffle up your spirits, and put a tongue
In every wound of Cæsar, that should move
The stones of Rome to rise and mutiny."

[4] Josephus' *Jewish Wars* and Charlotte Elizabeth's *Judea Capta* give vivid pictures of these times, and show how their own bad life was ruining the nation, and repentance would have saved it.

12 Whose *h* fan is in his hand, and he will throughly purge his floor, and he will *i* gather his wheat into the garner; *j* but he will burn up the chaff with *k* unquenchable fire.

h Isai. 30. 24. *i* ch. 13. 30. *j* Mal. 4. 1. *k* Mark 9. 43, 48.

you the sign and symbol. I call you to repentance; but I cannot give you new life. I point you to one **that cometh after me**, whose forerunner I am, but who is so much greater, better, more worthy than I, that his **shoes I am not worthy to bear**, nor to unloose the thongs by

Winnowing Fans.

which the sandals were fastened. I am not worthy to perform the lowest, most humble service for him, for this work belonged to the very lowest class of servants.

He shall baptize you with the Holy Ghost. ("Ghost" is Old English for "spirit"). The mightiest power in the universe for renewing the heart and bringing in the kingdom of God. It would be as easy to bring springtime without the sun as the kingdom of God without the Holy Spirit. **And with fire.** The symbol of the Holy Spirit. The sun is fire, the source of all light and heat, purifying, health-giving, the source of beauty, comfort, life, fruitfulness, and all cheer and power. The fire was visibly manifested on the day of Pentecost, as a symbol of the perpetual but invisible operation of the Holy Spirit on the hearts of men.

VI. By showing that a Day of Judgment was at hand, ver. 12.

12. **Whose fan is in his hand.** The fan is not a fan in our sense; it is a broad, light, wooden shovel, with which the grain is thrown up to the breeze, so that the wind may carry off the lighter chaff while the heavier grain sinks down clean. **He will throughly**, old form of thoroughly, from the preposition *through*. "In that preposition lies the picture of the farmer beginning at one side of the floor, and working *through* to the other, cleansing as he goes."[1] The Greek word has the same force. The work will be done thoroughly, through and through. **Purge.** Cleanse, separate the good from the bad. His gospel, his invitations, his commands, the opportunities he presents, are forever testing men, separating the chaff from the wheat, the sheep from the goats. **His floor.**[2] Threshing-floor, which is usually a circular area of beaten earth, surrounded by a low bank. It represents the world of men into which Jesus has come, with its mingled wheat and chaff. **His wheat.** The good, the true members of his kingdom. **Into the garner.** Granary; the right place for the wheat; the kingdom of heaven; heaven. **But . . . the chaff.** The refuse; the useless, representing all who continue in sin, unrepentant, good for nothing, harmful. Those who refuse to be converted, and thus to be made into good wheat. **He will burn up . . . with unquenchable fire**, that no power can put out or enable them to escape. The only possible hope of wicked men is in ceasing to be wicked. There is a time in the lives of both individuals and of nations when the chaff may be changed into wheat. But there is no hope if they remain chaff. The same forces that preserve the wheat destroy the chaff. The fire that purifies the gold consumes the dross.

"Grant, O Lord," says Quesnell, "that I may have a heart not as of chaff, feeble, light, empty, barren, and tossed about with every wind, but as of wheat, pure, full of real holiness, firm in goodness, fruitful in good works."

The chaff is burned up (1) because it is useless; (2) it would again mingle with the wheat and destroy its best usefulness; (3) its ashes may enrich the ground and thus increase the crop of wheat. The good that bad men do, as in wars of conquest, is compelled to aid the kingdom of heaven, and the tragedy of their lives is made to do good as a warning. Compare Matt. chap. 25.[3]

[1] Prof. M. R. Vincent, *Word Studies*.

[2] Greek, ἄλωνα, of which our word *halo* is a transcript.

[3] See Hawthorne's *Mosses from an Old Manse*, "The Bosom Serpent;" Prof. Phelps' *Studies in the Old Testament*, "The Twin Serpents." Prest. G. Stanley Hall's *A Study of Fears* is very suggestive in connection with John's preaching. See, also, Plutarch *On the Delay of Divine Punishment*, annotated very finely by Prof. Peabody of Harvard University,

"It may be well for us to listen to Hesiod, who main-

SECTION V. — PREPARATIONS OF JESUS FOR ENTERING UPON HIS PUBLIC MINISTRY. 3 : 1–13 ; 4 : 1–11.

1. BY THE MINISTRY OF JOHN.
2. BY BAPTISM.
3. BY THE COMING UPON HIM OF THE HOLY SPIRIT.
4. BY THE TESTIMONY OF A VOICE FROM HIS HEAVENLY FATHER.
5. BY THE TEMPTATION IN THE WILDERNESS.

Time.

The Baptism was probably in Jan., A. D. 27 ; the Temptation, the 40 days immediately following.

Place.

The Baptism, at Bethabara, on one of the fords of the Jordan ; the Temptation in the Wilderness of Judea, northwest of Jericho.

JESUS was about 30 years old. Luke 3 : 23.

13 ¶ [l] Then cometh Jē'sus [m] from Găl'ĭ-lee to the Jôr'dan unto John, to be baptized of him.

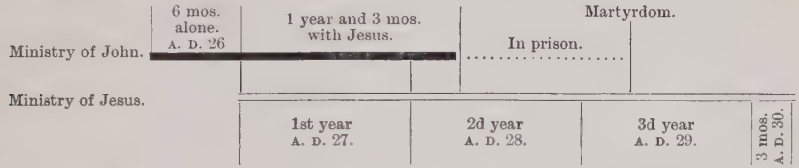
l For vers. 13–17, see Mark 1. 9–11 & Luke 3. 21, 22. Cp. John 1. 32–34. *m* ch. 2. 22.

It is love that warns, and cruelty that fails to warn, and cries Peace, Peace, when there is no peace.

1. THE PREPARATION THROUGH THE MINISTRY OF JOHN.

John's ministry of preparation for Jesus continued nearly two years, from the early summer of A. D. 26 till March, A. D. 28 ; and after that he was in prison, holding up his light from a dungeon for another year till his martyrdom in March, A. D. 29.

Note how perfectly this ministry of John was adapted to its purpose not only in its character, but in its circumstances and duration.


6 mos. alone. A. D. 26
1 year and 3 mos. with Jesus.
Martyrdom.
In prison.
Ministry of John.
Ministry of Jesus.
1st year A. D. 27.
2d year A. D. 28.
3d year A. D. 29.
3 mos. A. D. 30.

For six months before Jesus came upon the scene, John was preaching and awakening a deep religious interest and expectation and a desire for better things. Then for a year and three months he preached in the wilderness of Judea, while Jesus was slowly beginning his ministry chiefly in the cities and villages of Judea, till about the time Matthew begins the story of his ministry in Galilee. This was like the overlapping where two pieces are spliced together, or the junction of a new scion into a branch whose twigs are removed when the scion has begun to grow from the sap of the tree. Then when the Messiah was fully established in his work, in the wise providence of God John was taken from his active work in a way that deepened the impression of his teachings. He was imprisoned for his faithfulness to duty. He had completed his work. Had he preached longer he would have marred its perfection and hindered the work of the Messiah. "That life is long which answers life's great end." Then for another year he was bearing silent testimony from his prison at Machærus, and at the end he was set upon a martyr's pedestal to shine down the ages as the forerunner of the Messiah.

2. PREPARATION FOR HIS PUBLIC MINISTRY THROUGH HIS BAPTISM, vers. 13–15.

PARALLELS. Mark 1 : 9 ; Luke 3 : 21.

13. **Then**, while John was preaching, and the

tains, not with Plato that punishment is a suffering that follows wrongdoing, but that it is a twin birth with wrongdoing, springing from the same soil and the same root." The wicked "receive, not after a long time, but during a long time, not a slower, but a longer punishment ; nor are they punished when they grow old, but they grow old in a state of punishment." "If we confine the name of punishment to the last stage of punishment, . . . as well might we maintain that a fish that has swallowed the hook is not caught till we see it roasted by the cook or cut up on the table."

14 But [n] Jŏhn would [forbad] have hindered him, saying, I have need to be baptized of thee, and comest thou to me?

15 And / But Jē'şus answering said unto him, Suffer *it* [to be so] now: for thus it becometh [o] us to fulfil all righteousness. Then he [suffered] suffereth him.

16 And Jē'şus, when he was baptized, went up straightway [out of] from the water: and, lo, [p] the heavens were opened unto him, and he [q] saw the Spirit of God descending [like] as a dove, and [lighting] coming upon him;

n Cp. John 13. 6. *o* John 9. 4. *p* Acts 7. 56. *q* John 1. 32, 33. Cp. Luke 4. 18, 21. Acts 10. 38.

crowds coming to hear him. **Cometh Jesus** from his home in Nazareth of Galilee, to enter upon his great mission. He was about 30 years old (Luke 3: 23), in his full maturity. It was the age when priests entered upon their ministry (Num. 4: 3). **To Jordan**, probably at the ford near Jericho, and not far from Bethabara (John 1: 28). There is a peculiar analogy in the fact that this was probably the place where the Israelites first crossed the Jordan into the Promised Land. It was where Elijah and Elisha miraculously crossed the Jordan. **To be baptized of** (by) **him**, who was introducing the kingdom of God. The announcement and the one announced came together. "When Jesus heard John's call for consecration to the approaching kingdom, he recognized the voice of duty, and he sought the baptism that he might do all that he could 'to make ready the way of the Lord.'" [1]

14. **But John forbad him.** The imperfect tense implies not that John actually forbade or hindered him, but was in the act of forbidding, had it in mind to prevent him. So the R. V., "would have hindered." [2] **I have need.** I am the sinful but repentant one. I am the inferior, only the doorkeeper, the preparer of the way. It is more fitting that I should express my repentance by being **baptized of thee** than that the sinless one should come to me for baptism.

How did John recognize Jesus as so holy, the possible Messiah? (1) They were kinsmen, and John could not have been brought up in ignorance of the circumstances of Jesus' birth, the song of the angels, the visit of the wise men, the song of Mary, and the prophecy of Simeon. (2) He must also have had some acquaintance with the pure and sinless life of Jesus at Nazareth. (3) Before this John had received from heaven the assurance that the Messiah was at hand, the means by which he was to recognize him (John 1: 33), and he presumed that Jesus was the one.

15. **Suffer it** (permit it) **for thus it becometh us**, both of us, or a general statement true of all men, **to fulfil all righteousness**, to do what is right, what ought to be done.

Why was Jesus baptized? The reason is practically summed up in the expression "to fulfil all righteousness." (1) "It was right for all good men to be baptized; and Jesus, as a man, was under obligations to do whatever was incumbent on other good men. If one so deeply devout had stayed away from the ministry and baptism of the new prophet, it would have been setting a very bad example, unless explained." [3] "As men could consecrate themselves to a holy life and work in baptism, so could he; and so he did, pledging himself to the higher activity of that Messianic life on which he was only then entering." [4] (2) "Jesus was the example for his disciples to imitate; and as baptism was to be an ordinance of perpetual obligation in the new dispensation, we see in the baptism of Jesus an example to his followers." [5] (3) It was *a public renunciation of sin and a public profession of religion.* It is true that Christ himself knew no sin and needed no repentance (John 8: 46; 14: 30), but all the more would he renounce all sin publicly, showing where he stood in relation to it. (4) "He was baptized in order to show that he would achieve his redeeming work by sharing in the fortunes of our fallen and wrecked humanity." "He is in very truth our fellow man, and as such enters into man's duties." [6] (5) "Our Lord was now at the age (the thirtieth year) of the priests at their entrance into office (Num. 4: 3)." [7] (6) Thus, by his own personal obedience to all righteousness, Jesus was prepared to teach the people.

"It is not true, as is sometimes said, that Christ professed religion only by his life." [8]

3. BY THE COMING OF THE HOLY SPIRIT UPON HIM. ver. 16.

Parallels. Mark 1: 10; Luke 3: 22.

16. **Went up straightway out of the water** and up the bank of the river. He was praying as he went (Luke 3: 21). Thus it was when he

[1] Prof. Rush Rhees, *The Life of Jesus.*

[2] The verb is διεκώλυεν. The preposition διά, through, thoroughly, intensifies the verb. John strenuously, earnestly protested, with deep feeling.

[3] Prof. John A. Broadus. [4] W. N. Clark, D. D.

[5] G. W. Clark, D. D.

[6] George D. Boardman, D. D., *The Divine Man.*

[7] Prof. M. W. Jacobus. [8] Lyman Abbott, D. D.

17 And lo,[r] a voice from heaven, saying,[s] This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased.

r John 12. 28. s Matt. 17. 5. 2 Pet. 1. 17. Cp. Ps. 2. 7. Isai. 42. 1. Eph. 1. 6. Col. 1. 13. 1 John 5. 9.

was transfigured. **The heavens were opened.** In Mark, R. V., "rent asunder." All that had hidden from him the view of his heavenly home and his Father above was rent asunder, and he saw into the very heaven of heavens. And the way was shown from heaven to earth. **He** (Jesus) **saw**, so did John (John 1: 34). **The Spirit of God descending like a dove.** The Holy Spirit descended not only in the *manner* of a dove, but in the bodily shape of a dove (Luke 3: 22).[1] This was the symbol; the coming of the Spirit was a reality. **Lighting upon him.** It was by this sign that John was to know for certain that Jesus was the Messiah whose way he had been preparing. Thus he could point him out to others (John 1: 32-34). "The dove was historically connected in the Jewish mind with the abatement of the waters after the flood, and has become, as well as the olive branch, a symbol of peace among all Christian people; and it is referred to by Christ as a symbol of harmlessness and gentleness."[2] We should add purity and a loving, attractive nature. It was the symbol of salvation. "All along the ages it is the power of his gentleness and tenderness and meekness — his love, in short — that has been victorious. He has 'wooed and won.'"[3] The Spirit produces, in the hearts of those who dwell in the Spirit, the dove-like nature, — gentle, loving, attractive. The dove and the fire are complementary symbols expressing different aspects of the work of the Holy Spirit.

THE OBJECT was: (1) To illumine his nature to himself, "to complete his growing consciousness of his relation to God." (2) "It marked the official beginning of his ministry like the anointing of a king."[4] (3) It pointed Jesus out as the Son of God (John 1: 32-34).

4. BY THE TESTIMONY OF A VOICE FROM HIS HEAVENLY FATHER, ver. 17.

PARALLELS. Mark 1: 11; Luke 3: 22.

17. **Lo, a voice from heaven.** Three times during our Lord's earthly ministry was a voice heard from heaven: (1) at his baptism; (2) at his transfiguration (Mark 9: 7); (3) in the courts of the temple during Passion Week (John 12: 28). **This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased.** Thus God endorsed him and his mission, and showed to the Jewish nation that here was the Messiah. It must also have strengthened and confirmed the human Jesus as to his nature and his work.

PRACTICAL SUGGESTIONS. These three things are essential to every Christian; and in proportion as he has received them will he be fitted for any work, or mission, or reform, in promoting the kingdom of God.

1. He needs to publicly confess his faith in Christ, and to stand pledged on the side of righteousness.

2. He needs the baptism of the Holy Spirit, whose symbols are a dove and fire.

3. He needs the approval of God, manifest to himself and to others; a divine call and endorsement in some form.

[1] Dean Alford. [2] Lyman Abbott, D. D. [3] Morison. [4] *Int. Crit. Com.*

CHAPTER 4.

SECTION V. (*continued*). — THE FIFTH PREPARATION OF JESUS FOR HIS PUBLIC WORK, — VICTORY OVER TEMPTATION. 4: 1–11.

1. FIRST TEMPTATION.
2. SECOND TEMPTATION.
3. THIRD TEMPTATION.
4. VICTORY OVER TEMPTATION.

Time.
January and February, A. D. 27.
Place.
The Wilderness of Judea.
Parallel Accounts.
Luke 4: 1-13.
Mark 1: 12, 13.

1 *t* THEN was Jē'sus led up of the Spirit into the wilderness *u* to be tempted of the devil.

t For vers. 1–11 see Mark 1. 12, 13. Luke 4. 1–13. *u* Cp. Heb. 2. 18 & 4. 15.

1. Then was Jesus led up of the Spirit. It was just after his baptism and he was full of the Holy Spirit (Luke 4: 1). It was some impulse of this Spirit that impelled him to go (Mark 1: 12). **Into the wilderness.** Where in solitude he could be absorbed in intense meditation, and fight for himself the great battle with temptation. Mark says he was "with the wild beasts" (*i. e.*, without human companionship or help). There is no hint given as to the place where Jesus went to be tempted, but most authorities incline to the northern part of the wilderness of Judea, north of the line between Jerusalem and Jericho, with the Jordan and the upper part of the Dead Sea on the east. Tradition places it in Mount *Quarantania*, not far from Jericho, near the Jordan. It was named *Quarantania* (which means a space of forty days) because Jesus was supposed to have passed his forty days of fasting in one of its caves. **To be tempted of the devil.** For the whole forty days, according to Luke. It was not merely one sudden assault. The three temptations were either a summary of the whole forty days' experience, or the final assaults at the close.[1]

SOME PRELIMINARY CONSIDERATIONS.

I. We will best understand these temptations if we gain a clear vision of the circumstances in which Jesus is placed at the beginning of his Messianic work.

He stood on the threshold of his lifework, his mission from heaven. The greatness of the work was appalling. Before him lay two ways; which should he choose?

On the one hand were the popular expectations of the Jews, an outward political kingdom, victories over Rome, an independent nation standing at the head of the world, a king more splendid than Solomon in all his glory, visible, honored, quickly gained, a movement with the tide of Jewish feeling and opinion.

On the other hand a religious movement, overthrowing the hopes and powers of the leaders, resisted by every prejudice and influence, silent, almost invisible, slow in coming, disappointing to the people, victorious only by his death, and long after his death.

Which should he choose? Could he undertake it? Which was the best way? Here was the crisis of his life, the crisis of the history of the world. Satan seized the opportunity *to tempt*, and God used it as a test. It was a test whether Jesus was qualified for his office, — whether he would remain true to the spiritual idea of the Messiah. In order to be the Saviour of tempted mankind, it was necessary that he himself should be tempted in all points like as we are, yet without sin (Heb. 4: 15). He must fight the battle to show us how to gain the victory, we having the same helps that he had. As the first Adam, the head of the race, must be tempted and tested at the beginning of his career, so must the second Adam, the head of the redeemed

[1] On the Temptation: Dr. Wace's *Central Points of Our Lord's Ministry;* Dr. Boardman's *The Divine Man*, "The Temptation;" Rev. George S. Barrett's *The Temptation of Christ*. George MacDonald has two excellent sermons on the temptation, in C. S. Robinson's *Sabbath Evening*. Milton's *Paradise Lost;* Longfellow's *Divine Tragedy*.

For illustrations, see Milton's *Paradise Regained*, Book 3; the Sirens and Circe, in Homer's *Odyssey* (the story of Circe is best told in Hawthorne's exquisite *Tanglewood Tales*); the tract, *Peter Parley;* Bunyan's *Pilgrim's Progress*, "The Battle with Apollyon;" Farrar's *Life of Christ in Art*, pp. 310–312; Rogers' *Greyson Letters*, "The Madman and the Devil;" Jacox's *Secular Annotations*, pp. 10, 143; story of St. Anthony's temptation in Foster's *Cyclopedia*, 5657.

people of God, be tempted and tested at the beginning of his work. The first Adam failed, and changed paradise into a desert; the second Adam gained the victory, and changed a desert into paradise.

II. Temptation is the testing of a person: either to see what he is fit for, with the desire that he stand the strain; or with the intent to make him fall. The first is God's way; he *tests and tries* men. The second is Satan's way; he *tempts*. God never tempts men (Jas. 1 : 13). But God does transform the temptations of Satan and of men into *trials* for their good.

III. Two Elements in Temptation. (1) There is some strong allurement or attraction, and the strength of the temptation depends upon the intensity and continuity of the allurement. (2) There must be something wrong in the thing desired or in the way and conditions of attaining it.

IV. The Temptations of Jesus were Real. In whatever form the temptations came, the battle was real. It was no sham fight. It was no mere form, for example's sake. Satan was in earnest, and intended to prevent the coming of the kingdom of heaven with every force he could muster and every scheme he could devise. And Jesus knew that he could choose good or evil, and that the result for himself, for the human race, and for the kingdom of God depended upon his choice. There was no foreordained certainty of victory.

V. How could a Holy Being be tempted? The reply comes by distinguishing between (1) the desire, which may be natural and right, and (2) the indulgence of that desire in forbidden ways. It is not sinful to be hungry, but it is sinful to satisfy that hunger by lying, or stealing, or disobedience. Eve did not sin in liking the forbidden fruit and in desiring knowledge. She sinned when she ate contrary to God's command. We are tempted by our natural desires; by right longings and hungerings of spirit which are right and good. Sin is the yielding to an unlawful gratifying of those desires. Jesus was tempted by means of the good that was in him, through his desire to do good and to save men.

> "'T is one thing to be tempted, Escalus,
> Another thing to fall."
>
> Shakespeare.

Professor Plummer, in the *Int. Crit. Com.* on Luke, with true insight, says: "The force of a temptation depends not upon the sin involved in what is proposed, but upon the advantage connected with it. And a righteous man, whose will never falters for a moment, may feel the attractiveness of the advantage more keenly than the weak man who succumbs; for the latter probably gave way before he recognized the whole of the attractiveness, or his nature may be less capable of such recognition. In this way the sinlessness of Jesus augments his capacity for sympathy; for in every case he felt the *full* force of temptation." "Sympathy with the sinner in his trial does not depend on the experience of sin, but on the experience of the strength of the temptation to sin, which only the sinless can know in its full intensity. He who falls yields before the last strain."[1]

VI. The Tempter. Jesus was tempted of the devil (*diabolos*). In the original, the word is always with the article, and always in the singular number. Whenever the plural "devils" is used, it is the translation of another word, "demons." "Devil" means calumniator, slanderer, accuser, one who seeks by vile, false means to injure others by slandering God, misrepresenting the truth, and so leading men astray. The Hebrew "Satan" means "one who opposes," "an adversary," one opposed to God, to good, to the welfare of man, man's great enemy. He is the leader, the chief of evil spirits. It is no more unreasonable to believe in a personal devil than in bad men, bad leaders on earth. Denying the existence of the devil lays much heavier charges of evil on the nature of man than does the belief in Satan.

VII. In what Form the Tempter came to Jesus we do not know, but we do know that he was tempted "like as we are." And this assures us of several things.

1. Satan could not have come as Satan, as Apollyon to Bunyan's Pilgrim, with horrible form and sulphurous and flaming breath; for he does not tempt us in that way. Such an appearance would drive us away, not attract us. It is not the drunkard in his loathsome wretchedness, nor the terrors of delirium tremens, but the gilded saloon, the fascination of the early exhilaration of wine, that tempts men to intemperance.

> "Vice is a monster of so frightful mien,
> As, to be hated, needs but to be seen."

2. If he came in bodily form at all, it must have been as an angel of light, or "in the guise of a friendly stranger, with gracious manner and plausible speech."

3. "My own impression," says Dr. Boardman,[2] "is that Satan came to him in a guise hardly distinguishable from his own mental operations." "Temptation is all the more effective because so insidious, seeming to rise out of our own minds." "Bunyan, who knew so well the windings of the human heart, has admirably illustrated this when he represents his Pilgrim, while walking through the Valley of the Shadow of Death, as horrified by what seemed to be his own blasphe-

[1] Canon Westcott, on Heb. 2 : 18.

[2] *The Divine Man.*

2 And when he had *v* fasted forty days and forty nights, he [was] afterward [an] *w* hungred.

3 And [when] *x* the tempter came [to him, he and] said [unto him,] If thou [be art] *y* the Son of God, command that *z* these stones [be made become] bread.

v Cp. Deut. 9. 9, 18 & 1 Kin. 19. 8. *w* Cp. John 4. 6, 7. *x* 1 Thess. 3. 5. *y* See ch. 14. 33. *z* Cp. ch. 3, 9.

mies." Bunyan's picture is this: "Just as he was come over against the mouth of the burning pit, one of the wicked ones got up behind him, and stepped up softly to him and whispered grievous blasphemies to him, which he verily thought had proceeded out of his own mind." [1]

Flowers of Comfort in the Wilderness of Temptation. No one can enter upon the great world of life and usefulness without first being tempted and tried. Thus at the beginning of the Christian life comes the great temptation, — the battle as to who shall rule the soul: its success is *conversion*, the entrance upon the new and the true life. All who would become strong and useful must gain their power largely through victory over temptation. It is thus that the soul "builds itself larger mansions." It is a chief factor in education. Men gain victories only through battles. They cultivate courage through things that test courage. They grow in faith through the things that try their faith. They learn business by taking the risks of business. People without trials and temptations are always failures.

Again, the fact that Christ was tempted shows us that the fact that we are tempted is no proof that we are wicked. "Some sensitive natures conclude that they must be very sinful because they are so much tempted," says Wayland Hoyt, "whereas multiplicity of temptation is often rather an evidence of faithfulness and integrity. The strongest attacks are made upon the strongest forts. Repeated temptation argues the existence of resistance."

Four Aspects of Each Temptation. In order to understand the three great temptations which are now described, it is necessary that we seeclearly four things in respect to each of them.

(1) The Allurement. What it was that made the act so intensely desirable to an innocent and holy person like Jesus.

(2) The Wrong in doing what was proposed.

(3) The Means of Victory. The same for Jesus as for us.

(4) The Application to us. The temptation as a type of our temptations.

THE FIRST TEMPTATION THROUGH NATURAL APPETITES AND DESIRES, vers. 2–4.

2. **Fasted forty days and forty nights** Being tempted all the time (Mark, Luke). He was probably thinking, praying, planning.

Old Testament Examples. Moses (Ex. 34: 28) and Elijah (1 Kings 19: 8), representing the law and the prophets on the Mount of Transfiguration; each spent forty days fasting in the wilderness.

1. The Attraction. **He was afterward an hungred.** When the reaction has begun, hunger asserts itself with terrible force. The stories of shipwrecked sailors, or of sieges, as that of Jerusalem, where women ate their own children, give some conception of the intense craving of Jesus' hunger at this time. No stronger temptation could come to man.

3. **The tempter came to him.** In this hour, when his desire for food was strongest, and his powers of resistance weakest. Satan still watches his time, and attacks us when weary, sick, troubled, disheartened, and nervous. **If thou be** (art) **the Son of God,** if you really are God's Son, and hence are possessed of miraculous powers, **command that these stones,** probably pointing to one of the small, round, flat stones lying near him, which looked like their loaves of bread, "and which were represented in legend as the petrified fruits of the cities of the plain. The very appearance of these stones, like the bread for which the faint body hungered, may have added force to the temptation." [1] **Be made bread,** and thus satisfy your hunger, and at the same time prove that you have the powers of the

[1] "Tintoretto, in his *Temptation of Christ*, in the Scuola di San Rocco, makes the tempter a beautiful angel with an evil face." — Farrar's *Life of Christ in Art*. "The picture owes a great part of its effect to the lustre of the jewels in the armlet of this evil angel, and to the beautiful color of his wings. The armlet is seen by reflected light, its tones shining by inward lustre, this occult fire being the only hint given of the real character of the tempter." — Ruskin, in *Stones of Venice*. See Alexander Robertson's *The Bible of St. Mark's*, p. 222, for description of the mosaic of the Temptation, in St. Mark's, Venice.

In Moore's *Lalla Rookh*, the prophet of the silver veil tempts Zelica by visions of blessing which conceal his selfish soul, and by the silver veil which hides his hideous features.

> "Here judge if hell with all its power to damn
> Can add one curse to the foul thing I am."

4 But he answered and said,[a] It is written, [b] Man shall not live by bread alone,
but by every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of God.
5 [c] Then the devil taketh him [up] into [d] the holy city; and [setteth] [he set] him on [a] [the] pinnacle of the temple,
6 [And] [and] saith unto him, If thou [be] [art] the Son of God, cast thyself down: for it is
written, [e] He shall give his angels charge concerning thee: [and in *their*] [And on their] hands they
shall bear thee up, [lest at any time] [Lest haply] thou dash thy foot against a stone.

a ver. 7, 10. Eph. 6. 17. *b* Cited from Deut. 8. 3. Cp. John 4. 34. *c* Luke 4. 9. *d* ch. 27. 53. Neh. 11. 18. Isai. 48. 2 & 52. 1. Rev. 11. 2. Cp. Ps. 46. 4 & 48. 1 & Rev. 21. 2 & 22. 19. *e* Cited from Ps. 91. 11, 12.

true Son of God. The temptation was much more than to satisfy hunger, however intense. It was to test his power as the Son of God in the lower plane of the people's expectations that the Messiah would be able to feed his people and their armies as Moses fed the Israelites with manna. How the people would hail such a king! as is shown by their trying to make him king after he had fed the five thousand.

The desire for food and the desire to hasten the kingdom of God were innocent and good.

II. The Sin in yielding. For unless it was wrong, there was no *temptation* in his hunger, but only an *opportunity* to satisfy it.

The wrong was not in satisfying his hunger, for he accepted food from the angels (ver. 11), but in doing it when he ought not to, at the instigation of Satan, at the expense of higher things. This would have destroyed his power and mission as a Saviour of men. He could not then be tempted like as we are, if he used his supernatural power to save himself from hunger, for we have no such power. "Such a course," says Godet, "would have made his humanity a mere appearance." "It was," says MacDonald, "God's business to take care of him, his to do what his Father told him to do." It would thus have been the giving up of his mission as the Redeemer for the sake of something to eat, selling his soul, and all souls, for a mess of pottage. It would have been the choice of the outward kingdom according to the popular expectations, and giving up the spiritual kingdom which alone is the true kingdom of God. And this was what Satan was seeking.

III. The Victory came through a right use of the Word of God.

4. **It is written**, in Deut. 8: 3, quoted from the Greek translation. **Man shall not live by bread alone.** By food for the body. This quotation referred to the experience of the Israelites in the wilderness, when, in answer to their bitter complaints of hunger from the absence of ordinary food, God sent them manna. God, by his word, could give other kinds of food in his own time and way. It had a lower meaning, referring to manna, and a higher, referring to spiritual food. Jesus meant (1) that God could feed him in other ways than by his doing wrong, as indeed he did soon after, for the angels ministered unto him; (2) that there was something higher, better, more needful than earthly food, even obedience, faith, love, character, righteousness. "He that would save his life shall lose it."

Modern Applications. Our bodies and our souls are full of desires, appetites, hungers, which are innocent in themselves, but which we are tempted to gratify in wrong ways, Satan's ways, in contradistinction to God's ways. This is the essence of most sins of the flesh, which work disease and death, as intemperance, gluttony, and social vices. So too our highest and deepest longings — as for love, for usefulness, for success, for larger spheres — may be gratified in wrong ways, at the expense of character, and on low, outward, instead of holy spiritual methods.

Examples. Eve losing paradise by eating the forbidden fruit. Esau selling his birthright for a mess of pottage. David blackening the close of his life by yielding to passion.

THE SECOND TEMPTATION.

To gain the Kingdom of Good by a False and Presumptuous Faith. It is the seeking to obtain success, happiness, a life worth living, by worldly means instead of the divine, by a misuse of God's promises; by expecting results without fulfilling the conditions.

I. The Attraction.

5. **Taketh him up into the holy city.** Jerusalem, literally, or in spirit. **On a** (the) **pinnacle**, or rather wing, **of the temple.** The word *Temple* here includes the whole mass of sacred buildings in the temple area. "Herod's Temple had two wings, the northern and southern, of which the southern was higher and grander, hence probably *the* wing."[2] The roof was flat and surrounded by a balustrade. From it one looked down six hundred feet into the valley of Hinnom.

6. **If thou be the Son of God.** Thus planting a doubt in his mind. **Cast thyself down.**

[1] Prof. M. R. Vincent, *Word Studies*. "By a similar fancy certain crystallizations on Mt. Carmel and near Bethlehem are called 'Elijah's Melons' and the 'Virgin Mary's Tears.'"

[2] Prof. M. R. Vincent.

7 Jē'sus said unto him, [f] [It] Again it is written, [again,] [g] Thou shalt not [h] tempt the Lord thy God.

f ver. 4, 10. *g* Cited from Deut. 6. 16. *h* Cp. Isai. 7. 12.

Not into the valley of Hinnom, but into the court of the Temple among the crowds. Why? (1) It would prove that he was indeed the Son of God. (2) It would seemingly prove his perfect trust in God. **For it is written**, in Ps. 91 : 11, Septuagint (Greek) version, then in common use. "The devil can cite Scripture for his purpose."[1] **He shall give his angels charge**, etc. Satan's meaning is, You can do this act in perfect safety, for you rest on God's promise, which cannot be broken, and you honor God by your perfect confidence in his Word.

To understand the force of this temptation to Jesus, the picture of the scene must be clear and vivid before our minds. "He who has not seen the building of Herod has never seen a beautiful thing." The Temple proper was surrounded by magnificent cloisters of Corinthian columns thirty-eight feet high, enclosing the Temple area, "which was always thronged with ecclesiastics and their retainers and clients, gossip-seekers of the city, and visitors from the country." "The picture paints Christ appearing on the battlements of the temple towers, and descending thence, superior to the law of gravitation, attended by a choir of angels, and in this pomp passing into the cloisters of the Temple and the colonnade of Corinthian pillars, the hosannas of cherubim declaring him to be the Son of David. The picture paints him receiving the homage of the national leaders and being elected to the throne of David."[2]

> "Reveal thyself by royal act and gesture,
> Descending with the bright triumphant host
> Of all the highermost
> Archangels, and about thee as a vesture
> The shining clouds, and all thy splendors show,
> Unto the world below."[3]

To inaugurate his society in Jerusalem as the glorious capital of his empire, to make the Temple the basis of his sway, to rally the elect spirits for renovating the old system, to utilize all the ecclesiastical and intellectual forces, "to become the visible dictator of invisible powers," all this lay within the tempter's proposition. The vision must have charmed him, as he saw the whole nation following him, the Roman yoke broken, the kingdom of God bursting upon the earth in sudden and unspeakable glory, instead of the long, slow, unnoticed process through an humble teacher, with few disciples, and a career ending upon the cross.

II. The Sin. (1) To have done this would have been a misrepresentation of the nature of faith, the very foundation of his work. (2) It would have been tempting God by expecting an unwarranted exemption from the natural laws under which all men live, and so he would not have been tempted like as we are. (3) It would have been disobeying the Scriptures defining what the Messiah should do. It was defying God's way for the coming of his kingdom. It would have destroyed the whole value and power of his salvation, gaining him subjects, not children; outward homage, and not new hearts. It would have rendered impossible the true and blessed kingdom of heaven, in a morally transformed world.

III. The Victory was gained. A right use of the weapon Satan had used against him. "Jesus met the temptation with the Word of God: a weapon that we too may use, like King Arthur's sword, 'which flashed with the flame of sixty torches, and with every stroke clove a man.'"[4]

7. **It is written** (Deut. 6: 16) **again.** On the other hand, as explaining the words you quote. "In that *It is written again* of Christ lies a great lesson, the secret of our safety and defence against all distorted use of isolated passages of Holy Scripture." We need the balance of counter and coördinated truth to preserve us from distortion and error.[5] **Thou shalt not tempt the Lord thy God.** That is, "distrust God or test his power presumptuously." A case is described, Ex. 17: 1–7. It is to demand that God should fulfil his promises to those to whom they are not

[1] In Scott's *Ivanhoe* the Templar essays to corrupt the Jewess by citing the examples of David and Solomon. "If thou readest the Scriptures," retorts Rebecca, "and the lives of the saints only to justify thine own license and profligacy, thy crime is like that of him who extracteth poison from the most healthful and necessary herbs."

> "But then I sigh; and, with a piece of Scripture,
> Tell them that God bids us do good for evil;
> And thus I clothe my naked villany
> With old odd ends stolen forth of Holy Writ;
> And seem a saint, when most I play the devil."
> *Richard III.*, Act I., Scene 3.

> "The devil can cite Scripture for his purpose.
> An evil soul producing holy witness
> Is like a villain with a smiling cheek,
> A goodly apple rotten at the heart."
> *Merchant of Venice*, Act I., Scene 3.

[2] W. W. Peyton, D. D., in *Expositor* for Nov., 1890.
[3] Longfellow, *Divine Tragedy*.
[4] J. L. Hurlbut, D. D.
[5] So Arbp. Trench.

8 *i* Again, the devil taketh him up into an exceeding high mountain, and sheweth him all the kingdoms of the world, and the glory of them;
9 And saith unto him, All these things will I give thee, if thou wilt fall down and worship me.

i Luke 4. 5.

made, and in circumstances in which they do not apply, or else appear to have dishonored his Word.

Whatever had happened to Jesus, had he yielded, the victory would have been Satan's. Either he would have been killed, and that would have ended his work; or if by chance he survived, he would have lost faith, obedience, character, and his whole mission to man.

IV. Modern Applications. The attempt to build up the church or Sunday-school by pandering to fashion or wealth instead of by spiritual life. Men expect heaven without the faith and love that make heaven. They expect the fruit of victories without fighting the battles. They expect health, while they violate all laws of health. They expect results, while they refuse to use the means, and call it faith. They complain of God as bringing upon them the evils which are the result of their own sins and errors. They blame God for punishment, while they refuse to forsake their sins. They put themselves in needless perils, and blame God if he does not protect them.[1]

3. THE THIRD TEMPTATION.

To gain Success by Wrong-doing. Vers. 8–10.

I. The Attraction. 8. **The devil taketh him up**, probably in vision or imagination, as there is no mountain from which can be seen with the natural eye **all the kingdoms of the world, and the glory of them.** Not only the splendid courts and cities like Rome, but the kingdoms of literature, art, and culture in Greece; the "barbaric pearls and gold" of the Orient; and possibly a vision of the future, with its glorious civilizations, with its redeemed peoples, fulfilling all that the prophets foretold, or John in Patmos saw of the new heavens and the new earth.

> "The kingdoms of the world thine eyes behold
> Like a great map unrolled."

"It was Satan's masterpiece."

Milton, in his *Paradise Regained*, pictures with matchless skill "our Lord as lost in meditation upon the means by which his kingdom can be founded and built up."

> "Victorious deeds
> Flamed in my heart; heroic acts, — one while
> To rescue Israel from the Roman yoke,
> Then to subdue and quell o'er all the earth
> Brute violence and proud tyrannic power."

9. **All these things will I give thee.** I will withdraw my opposition. I will use all my influence and power to make you the greatest worldly king, like Alexander or Cæsar. Your hopes shall be realized. You shall

> "Clothe the waste with dreams of grain,
> And on the midnight sky of rain
> Paint the Golden Morrow."

In a measure Satan did have these things. Christ later called him the "prince of this world." On everything he had stamped his seal. "The trail of the serpent was over them all." The kingdoms were ruled largely according to Satan's principles.

Satan offered him at once, without waiting long centuries for wrongs to cease, the very things he had come on purpose to gain. There will be no slow and painful process, no conflict, no persecutions, no great self-denials, no martyrdoms, no soul lost; but the new era, the good time coming, will burst at once into noontide glory over all the earth. He came to vanquish Satan, and lo! he would surrender himself. This offer must have been exceedingly attractive. It was an appeal to the highest motives and noblest feelings. It had greater power and attractions because it was the way the Jews expected the Messiah to rule, and the kind of kingdom they longed for.[2]

II. The Sin lay in the conditions on which only Satan would fulfil his promise. **If thou wilt fall down and worship me.** This was the only condition possible. Satan does not mean a bald act of worship, a bending in outward reverence to the grim king of darkness. As Weiss says, "The suggestion that he would fall down before the actual devil and worship him is a sug-

[1] See Pres. Charles Cuthbert Hall's *Does God send Trouble?*

[2] There is a curious little picture in the Crystal Palace gallery of Munich, called *The Red Fisherman.* The devil in red costume is fishing for men, who are like fishes in a pond. The bait on his hook consists of gold coins, but near him are other kinds of bait, — crowns, swords, wines, jewels.

See Virgil's story of the wooden horse entering through the walls of Troy: —

"Daughters of Time the hypocritic days,
Muffled and dumb like barefoot dervishes,
And marching single in an endless file,
Bring diadems and fagots in their hands.
To each they offer gifts after his will, —
Bread, kingdoms, stars, and sky that holds them all."

10 Then saith Jē'sus unto him, Get thee hence, [j] Satan: for [k] it is written, [l] Thou shalt worship the Lord thy God, and [m] him only shalt thou serve.

11 Then the devil leaveth him; and, behold, [n] angels came and ministered unto him.

j See 1 Chr. 21. 1. *k* ver. 4, 7. *l* Cited from Deut. 6. 13. *m* 1 Sam. 7. 3. *n* ch. 26. 53. Luke 22. 43.

gestion which even he who is but moderately pious would without hesitation and with abhorrence refuse to entertain." Rather, Satan asked such an act of worship as when men worship money by loving it better than God; when they worship success by placing it before duty: a *real*, not a formal worship. Satan is too shrewd to insist on the *form* if he can gain the *heart*. It may have meant, as Bishop A. C. A. Hall suggests: "Flatter the people; be more politic in your teaching. Lower your standard a little; don't have so much to say about the cross, about self-denial;" or, "Place yourself at the head of an insurrectionary movement. Upset the Roman usurper. Lead us on to victory." Christ was to give up his spiritual kingdom for a temporal; his spiritual power of love for armies, palaces, and outward honors; his converting the world for a ruling of the world.

III. The Victory was gained, as before, by the Word of God planted in his memory and in his heart.

10. **Get thee hence, Satan.** It was by this proposal that Satan revealed himself. This was the Ithuriel's spear that made everything it touched appear in its true nature, as Milton represents it in the temptation in Eden. Jesus may not, before this, have realized that the tempter was Satan; but now the robes of light fell off, and Satan stood undisguised before him, in all his hideous nature. To give up dying for the sins of the world, to give up converting the world, and let Satan *really* rule, — this could come only from *Satan*, the great *adversary* of all good. **For it is written** (Deut. 6 : 13), **Thou shalt worship the Lord thy God.** The first and great commandment. There is none other worthy of worship, and there is no other way of gaining the true kingdom of God.

IV. Modern Applications. "We share the experience of this temptation when we are tempted, for the sake of power, wealth, or influence, to conform to the world, and to employ Satan's instruments in even seeming to do God's service. We yield to the third when we are conformed to this world, and adopt its policies and methods, and imbibe its spirit for the sake of its rewards." [1]

We find this temptation in the attempts of the church to fulfil its mission by worldly power and pomp, by dictating to governments, by secularizing the church, by statecraft, by wars and persecutions. The result has always been a spiritual failure. It is the gaining any success by wrongdoing; attaining power, or wealth, or rank, or high ambitions, or political and social heights, by any kind of wrongdoing.[2]

4. CONSOLATION AFTER VICTORY.

No greater victory has ever been recorded. The greatest joy and peace are those that come as a benediction after conflict.

11. **Then the devil leaveth him.** "For a season" (Luke 4 : 13). He was tempted again and again; at last in Gethsemane and on the cross. **And, behold, angels.** Spiritual beings; probably in visible form on this occasion. **Ministered** most naturally means "supplied him with food," as in the case of Elijah (1 Kings 19 : 5); and with all spiritual support, comfort, and companionship. Milton thus celebrates this victory: —

> "Straight a fiery globe
> Of angels on full sail of wings flew nigh . . .
> Then in a flowery valley set him down
> On a green bank, and set before him spread
> A table of celestial food, divine.
> Ambrosial fruits fetched from the Tree of Life,
> And from the Fount of Life, ambrosial drink
> . . . And as he fed, angelic choirs
> Sung heavenly anthems of his victory."

The First Year of Jesus' Public Ministry. — The Year of Beginnings. Chiefly in Judea. A. D. 27.

Between verses 11 and 12 belong more than a year of Jesus' public life, the whole of the Judean ministry, and the first months of the Galilean ministry up to March, A. D. 28. The events of this year are recorded only by John, the disciple who was more with Jesus at this time than any of the others. Matthew does not mention this year, for he knew nothing of it from personal experience. He does not begin his account till Jesus made his home in Capernaum where Matthew lived, and not long before his call to become a disciple. The chief events recorded were: —

[1] Abbott.

[2] N. P. Willis' *Poems*, "Parrhasius" shows how futile is ambition gained by sin. Robert Browning's *Poems*, "Bishop Blougram's Apology" shows the vanity of "success at any cost." In George Eliot's *Romola* Tito Melema gradually deteriorates by yielding to temptation. Mrs. Browning's Andrea del Sarto presents a similar case. Irving Brown's poem, *The Bubbles of Life*.

12 ¶ Now when Je'sus had he heard that *o* Jŏhn was cast into prison, delivered up, *p* he departed withdrew into Găl'-ĭ-lee;

o ch. 14. 3. Mark 1. 14. Luke 3. 19, 20. Cp. John 3. 24. *p* Luke 4. 14.

1. The First Disciples (James, John, Andrew, Peter, Nathanael). Bethabara. February. John 1 : 35–51.
2. The First Miracle (Water changed into Wine). Cana of Galilee. March. John 2 : 1–12.
3. The First Reform (Cleansing the Temple). Jerusalem. April. John 2 : 13–25.
4. The First Discourse (To Nicodemus). Jerusalem. April. John 3 : 1–21.
5. The First Tour. Throughout Judea. Summer and Autumn. John 4 : 1–4.
6. The First Samaritan Converts. Sychar. December. John 4 : 5–42.
7. The Second Miracle in Galilee. Cana and Capernaum. December. John 4 : 43–54.

All this time John was preaching and baptizing in the wilderness of Judea. This year was practically the offering to the Jews of Jerusalem and Judea the opportunity of welcoming the Messiah, and leading in the new movement.

The Second Year of Jesus' Public Ministry, A. D. 28. — The Year of Principles. The year in which Jesus laid down and worked out many of the fundamental principles and truths of his kingdom.

Recorded in Matthew 4 : 13–13 : 53 ; Mark 1 : 14–4 : 41 ; Luke 4 : 14–8 : 56 ; John 5 : 1–47.

The most marked stages were : —

1. Choosing the Apostles, — Organization.
2. Sermon on the Mount, — Principles.
3. Miracles, proving authority, and illustrating his mission.
4. Training of the Twelve.
5. Warnings and Invitations.
6. Growing opposition.
7. Teaching by Parables.
8. Great Truths, — water of life, forgiveness, seeking the lost, light and life.

The First Three Months, January–March, were spent in quiet labors. The last of March Jesus went to the Passover at Jerusalem, and healed the impotent man at the pool of Bethesda (John 5).

Section VI. — A GENERAL VIEW OF THE GALILEAN MINISTRY, 4 : 12–24.

1. A Beautiful Vision of the Prophet, vers. 12–16.
2. A Beautiful Picture of its Fulfilment, vers. 17–24.
   (1) Jesus changes his field of labor to Galilee.
   (2) The prophecy of better times.
   (3) The preaching that helped to fulfil it.
   (4) The summons of others to aid its fulfilment.
   (5) A general view of Jesus' ministry.

Time.

Spring of A. D. 28.

Place.

Capernaum and Galilee.

Second Year of Jesus' Ministry.

1. JESUS LEAVES JERUSALEM AND GOES TO GALILEE, vers. 12, 13.

12. **When Jesus had heard that John was cast into prison.** For the cause of John's imprisonment see Matt. 14 : 3–5. Jesus was in Jerusalem (Luke 4 : 14), attending the Passover the last of March, A. D. 28 (Andrews) ; or it was the autumn of A. D. 27, and this was the departure after his Judean ministry to enter upon his Galilean work, and his conversation with the woman of Samaria took place on the way.

He departed into Galilee. Not to avoid Herod Antipas, who imprisoned John, but to avoid the rising opposition of the Pharisees, who, now that John was put out of the way, could turn their whole attention to Jesus and the growing influence of his teaching (John 4 : 1 ; 5 : 16). The Jerusalem Jews rejected and opposed his work. **Into Galilee.** As a better sphere of work under the circumstances, and with fewer hindrances. The Galileans were more tolerant, less conservative, less bound by tradition, on account of their distance from Jerusalem, and their contact with Gentiles. The soil was rich, business was varied and good in farming, fisheries, manufactures, and trade, much of the trade between Egypt and Damascus passing through it. The people were prosperous, industrious, active, enterprising.[1] This was good soil in which Jesus could plant his truth, and begin his kingdom.

[1] Hon. Selah Merrill's *Galilee in the Time of Christ ;* Schurer's *Palestine in the Time of Christ.*

13 And leaving [q] Năz'a-rĕth, he came and dwelt in [r] Că-pĕr'na-ŭm, which is upon [s] the sea, coast, in the borders of [t] Zab'u-lon Zeb'u-lun and Neph'tha-lim: Naph'ta-li:

14 [u] That it might be fulfilled which was spoken by E-sa'ias I-sa'iah the prophet, saying,

15 [v] The land of Zab'u-lon, Zeb'u-lun and the land of Neph'tha-lim, by the way of Naph'ta-li, Toward the sea, beyond Jôr'dan,[w] Găl'ĭ-lee of the Ġĕn'tīleş;

16 [x] The people which sat in darkness saw Saw a great light; and And to them which sat in the region and [y] shadow of death, To them did light spring light is sprung up.

17 ¶ [z] From that time [a] began Jē'şus began to preach, and to say, [b] Repent: ye; for the kingdom of heaven is at hand.

q See ch. 2. 23. *r* ch. 8. 5, *al.* Cp. ch. 9. 1. *s* John 6. 1. *t* Josh. 19. 32–34. *u* See ch. 1. 22. *v* Cited from Isai. 9. 1, 2. *w* 1 Macc. 5. 15. *x* Isai. 42. 7. Luke 1. 79. *y* Job 3. 5. Ps. 23. 4. Amos 5. 8. *z* Mark 1. 14. *a* Acts 1. 22 & 10. 37. *b* ch. 3. 2.

13. **And leaving Nazareth**, his home for many years, and where he went first to preach to his friends and acquaintances. But they rejected him, and were so incensed that they tried to kill him by throwing him down the precipice overhanging the town. He therefore departed, and **dwelt**, made his home, **in Capernaum**, a flourishing city **upon the sea** of Galilee, on the northwest shore; **in the borders of Zabulon** and **Nephthalim** (Naphtali), two of the twelve tribes whose boundaries came together near that point.

Why did Christ choose Capernaum as the centre of his Galilean ministry? Probably because "Capernaum, more than any other city of Palestine with the single exception of Jerusalem, was a centre of commerce, travel, and especially of news. . . . Sailors, soldiers, merchants, travellers, princes, men of every class and from many parts of the world, passed through this place on business or pleasure. . . . Christ's gospel was for all the world, and here were messengers from the east, the west, and the south, who would carry tidings of what they had seen to their distant homes."[1]

2. THE PROPHETIC VISION, vers. 14–16.

14-16. **That it might be fulfilled**, in completer form, in the higher spiritual meaning. **Which was spoken by Esaias**, Greek for Isaiah, God's message through the prophet. Isai. 9: 1, 2. The territory spoken of, the tribes of **Zebulun** and **Naphtali**, were the northernmost tribes, **by the way of the sea**, or toward the Sea of Galilee, where the great eastern roads entered the country **beyond Jordan, Galilee of the Gentiles**, the portions of Galilee adjoining the heathen nations. All this was the borderland exposed to attack from the Syrian and Assyrian hordes. These were **the people which sat in darkness**. For Tiglath Pileser, king of Assyria, was invading their land, and Rezin, king of Damascus, was overrunning this region. Great multitudes were carried away captive and slain (see 2 Kings 15: 29–16: 9). This was a time when the people **sat in the region and shadow of death**. But in this darkness came the **great light** of deliverance from their enemies, for God broke "the yoke of his burden," "and the rod of his oppressor as in the day of Midian" (Isai. 9: 4), when Gideon overthrew with his three hundred men the mighty host of the invading Midianites (Judges 7). But even Isaiah saw that this outward trouble and darkness were but a type of the spiritual darkness of Israel, and foresaw the times of Christ, when the nation was on the very borders of spiritual ruin, in the chill of the shadow of death, "as the darkening of sight in the dying is a prelude to the night of death." And he saw the Messiah coming, the Wonderful Counsellor, the Prince of Peace, to be the Light of the world, the Dawn of a better day. (Isai. 9: 6, 7.)

3. THE PREACHING OF JESUS, WHICH BROUGHT THE LIGHT, ver. 17.

17. **From that time**, when he established himself at Capernaum, he began the public ministry which Matthew describes. It was a new and fuller movement. **Repent**, etc. This is the same message which John brought (see on 3: 2), only from more heavenly lips, with brighter light, with clearer vision, with fuller help. This was the substance of Jesus' preaching, manifested and expressed in a multitude of ways. Like the motto on the reverse of the United States great seal, *Novus Ordo Seculorum*, a new order of the ages had begun for the individual and for the nation. See an example of his preaching in Luke 4: 17–19.

[1] Hon. Selah Merrill in *Bib. World*, March, 1898.

18 ¶ [c] And Je'sus, walking by [d] the sea of Găl'ĭ-lee, he saw two brethren, Sī'mon who is called Pē'tĕr, and Ăn'drew his brother, casting a net into the sea; for they were fishers.

19 And he saith unto them, Follow Come ye after me, and I will make you [e] fishers of men.

20 And they straightway left their the nets, and followed him.

21 And going on from thence, he saw other two brethren, Jāmes *the son* of Zĕb'e-dee, and Jŏhn his brother, in a ship the boat with Zĕb'e-dee their father, mending their nets; and he called them.

c For ver. 18–22 see Mark 1. 16–20. Cp. Luke 5. 2–11 & John 1. 40–42. *d* ver. 13. *e* ch. 13. 47.

4. THE SUMMONS OF OTHERS TO AID ITS FULFILMENT, vers. 18–22.

18. Walking by the sea of Galilee, soon after his arrival at Capernaum. The water of this lake is salubrious, fresh, and clear, and it contains abundance of fish.[1]

Simon called Peter, the Rock, **and Andrew his brother.** These had become followers of Christ at the very beginning of his ministry, more than a year before (John 1 : 35–44). They belonged in Bethsaida. But after being with Jesus for a time they again returned to their business for support. During this period they could quietly tell many about the new prophet and his work. **Casting a net into the sea.** A *casting*-net, distinguished from the large hauling-net mentioned in chapter 13 : 47. **For they were fishers.** "It was a humble but respectable occupation, and one well fitted to promote vigor of body, a matter of no little moment, and independence of spirit, a matter certainly of very great moment."[2] Christ does not call idle men to work in his vineyard.

19. And he saith unto them. The circumstances in which this call was made are related with much greater fulness by Luke (5 : 1–11). Jesus was walking by the shore of the lake, surrounded by a crowding multitude. Seeing a boat belonging to Peter, whom he seems to have recognized as his former disciple, he enters into it, and from that pulpit teaches the people. At the close of his address he bids Peter return to his fishing. Peter replies that they had toiled all the previous night and caught nothing. But at Jesus' word he and his brother launch out, cast their net, and enclose a great multitude of fishes, so that James and John, their partners, had to come to their help. This miraculous draught so astonished Peter that he exclaimed, "Depart from me, for I am a sinful man, O Lord!" Then Jesus said unto them, **Follow me**, not only be a disciple, but spend your time in going around with me, to learn, to help, to be trained for future work. The call to be permanently one of the chosen twelve came later. Every one who came into that number must first be tested and tried, like a battleship on its trial voyage, or a candidate for entering college.

I will make you fishers of men. You shall draw men into the kingdom of heaven, as you have drawn fishes ashore by your skill. I bid you come up higher. Your skill with fishes shall teach you skill with men.

Note that the higher work comes to the disciples while they are faithfully performing their common daily tasks. So the song of the angels was heard by the shepherds while engaged in their ordinary work with wakeful zeal. It is to those who are faithful in the least that the call comes to higher duties.

20. And they straightway. Immediately, the straight way being the shortest distance between any two points. There was no indecision. They knew well him who had called them. **Left their nets, and followed him.** Their nets were the means of their living, and they gave them up and trusted to the precarious living of a poor man.

21. James. (The Greek form of *Jacob*.) He became the first martyr among the apostles (Acts 12 : 2). **Son of Zebedee** (*Jehovah's gift*). Husband of Salome, the sister of Mary, the mother of Jesus (John 19 : 25); who ministered to the Lord (Matt. 27 : 56), though he himself is not mentioned among the disciples of Jesus. Hence the two brothers were cousins of Jesus. "The mention of hired servants (Mark 1 : 20), of the two vessels employed (Luke 5 : 7), and the subsequent allusion to St. John's acquaintance with a person in so high a position as the high priest (John 18 : 15), seem to indicate that Zebedee, if not a wealthy man, was at any rate of some position at

[1] "Clear silver water in a cup of gold,
It shines — his lake — the sea of Chinnereth —
The waves he loved, the waves that kissed his feet
So many blessed days. Oh, happy waves!
Oh, little silver happy sea!"

"O Galilee, sweet Galilee,
Where Jesus loved so much to be;
O Galilee, blue Galilee,
Come sing thy song again to me."

[2] Morison.

22 And they immediately (straightway) left the ship (boat) and their father, and followed him.
23 ¶ *f* And Jē'sus went about in all Găl'ĭ-lee, *g* teaching in their synagogues, and *h* preaching the gospel of the kingdom, and *i* healing all manner of sickness (disease) and all manner of disease (sickness) among the people.

f Mark 1. 39. Luke 4. 15. *g* ch. 9. 35 & 13. 54. Mark 1. 21. John 18. 20. *h* ch. 24. 14. Luke 4. 43. Cp. ch. 13. 19. *i* ch. 8. 16 & 14. 35, 36. Mark 1. 34 & 6. 55, 56.

Capernaum."[1] **John** (*the grace of God*). The disciple whom Jesus loved. The writer of the Fourth Gospel, the Epistle General of John, and the Book of Revelation. Probably John was the disciple, not named, who accompanied Andrew in his first visit to Jesus on his return from the forty days' temptation (John 1 : 37–40), when Peter also became a follower of Jesus.

22. **They immediately left the ship** (*boat*) **and their father.** Probably with his consent. The call of God is above all earthly demands (Matt. 10 : 37). But we are to note that they did not leave their father unprovided for; and to show this may have been the reason why hired servants are mentioned (Mark 1: 20).

Fishers of Men. First. To be *fishers of men* is the duty and privilege of the disciples of Jesus.

Second. The *sea* is the evil world. In the oldest Christian hymn extant (by Clement of Austria) Christ is addressed as —

> "Fisher of men, the blest,
> Out of *the world's unrest*,
> Out of *sin's troubled sea*,
> Taking us, Lord, to thee."[2]

Out of this restless sea we are to bring men to the rest and peace and holiness of Christ.

Third. *The line and the net* are the gospel, with all its attractions and means of gaining souls.

Fourth. The net is of no use without the fishermen. It is personal work by those who are anxious to save men that brings them to Jesus. A leading Baptist clergyman said not long since that the experience of their missions had taught them that little success was gained by the printed word, without the living presence of the missionary. The personal element is a very important factor in all gospel work.

Fifth. *The object* is to bring men to the shore of eternal life. The very word *catch* (in Luke) implies, *to take alive*, to bring living men into the kingdom of God.

Sixth. Again, the work of the fisher is rather a work of art and skill than of force and violence. The fisherman *attracts* rather than drives. Great skill, patient toil, watchfulness, and care are necessary. The use of the right bait, and especially, in much fishing, the keeping one's self out of sight.[3]

Seventh. Hence the favorite early Christian symbol of the "Fish." "We little fishes," says Tertullian, "after our Fish (ΙΧΘΥΣ) are born in the water (of baptism)." The first letters of the title of Christ in Greek —

> Ἰησοῦς Χριστὸς Θεοῦ Υἱός Σωτήρ,
> Jesus Christ God's Son the Saviour,

— make the Greek word ΙΧΘΥΣ, *Ichthus*, FISH. "It was quite common 50 years ago for weather vanes or church spires to be in the form of a fish, a reproduction, probably, of the early Christian symbol."[4]

5. A GENERAL VIEW OF THE MINISTRY OF JESUS, vers. 23–25.

The Broad Field. 23. **And Jesus went about all Galilee.** This was his first tour of the country. Jesus scattered the good seed everywhere, knowing that some of it would fall into the good soil of honest hearts and spring up and bear fruit. This is much more effective than spending too large a proportion of time and strength in one place. For in every place there are some souls that are prepared, that are inclined to receive the gospel. These having been brought into the kingdom, all together form a large body of workers who have a strong, united power over the less impressible.

Teaching. Instructing, interpreting the scriptures, guiding the understanding, showing the truths of God. **In their synagogues.** The Jewish churches of that day, where any distinguished teacher could speak.

Preaching. Heralding, proclaiming the gospel, the good news from God, concerning the kingdom, the Messiah's kingdom, the kingdom of heaven.[5] It was the good news of God's fatherly love and care, of his forgiveness of sin, of knowledge of the way of life, of the power of the Holy Spirit, of new light breaking over all the earth.

Illustrating the Gospel by Deeds. **Healing all manner of sickness.** Severe, dangerous

[1] Cambridge Bible.

[2] *Rev. Com.*

[3] A fisherman gave three rules for catching trout. "The first is, Keep *yourself* out of sight; and the second is, Keep yourself farther out of sight; and the third is, Keep yourself farther still out of sight.' Good for catching men, too, I thought." — *Mark Guy Pearse.*

[4] George M. Adams, D. D.

[5] See on the title of Matthew's Gospel and notes on ch. 3 : 2.

24 And his fame the report of him went throughout forth into all [j] Sy̆r′ĭ-ȧ: and they brought unto him all that were sick, people that were taken holden with divers diseases and [k] torments, and those which were [l] possessed with devils, and [m] those which were lunatick, epileptic, and [n] those that had the palsy; palsied; and he healed them.

25 [o] And there followed him great multitudes of people from Găl′ĭ-lee, and *from* [p] Dē-căp′ŏ-lis, and *from* Jē-rụ′să-lĕm, and *from* Jū-dæ′ȧ, and *from* beyond Jôr-dạn.

j Luke 2. 2. *k* ch. 8. 6. *l* ch. 8. 16 & 9. 32, *al.* Cp. John 10. 21. *m* ch. 17. 15. *n* ch. 9. 2, 6. *o* Mark 3. 7, 8. Luke 6. 17. *p* Mark 5. 20.

diseases. "Homer always represents νόσος (disease) as the visitation of an angry deity." **Of disease.** Debility, weakness, *malaise.*

24. **And his fame.** The report of what he was doing, his reputation. **Went throughout all Syria.** "The fame passes to the north and east, rather than to the south. Galilee is connected by trade and affinity with Damascus, rather than with Jerusalem."[1] **And they brought unto him.** In consequence of what they had heard of his works of healing. **Torments.** Diseases attended with excruciating pain. Torment (Βάσανος) originally meant the "Lydian stone, or touchstone, on which pure gold, when rubbed, leaves a peculiar mark. Hence, naturally, a *test;* then a test or trial by *torture.*"[2] It meant *the rack or instrument of torture by which one is forced to divulge the truth,* and hence simply *torture, acute pains.*[3] **And those which were possessed with devils.** Demons. See on 8 : 28. The demoniac seemed to be completely under the power of the unclean spirit. It was a most terrible form of disease. **And those which were lunatick.** Epileptic. The word *lunatic* is derived from *luna,* the Latin word for moon, from the ancient belief that the changes of the moon affected mad persons. **Palsy.** Paralysis. See on 9 : 1–8. **And he healed them.** These healings were the natural accompaniment of his teaching and preaching, for (1) they were God's signature endorsing the claims of Jesus. It has been said that it would be easier to believe the gospel without the miracles. It is true in one way, but the faith would be worth so much the less. Great power lies in the fact that Jesus is so mighty that he can work miracles. (2) They were object lessons, expressing the love and forgiveness and comfort from God. Every one was a parable and a sermon. Every one made it easier to trust in God and love him. (3) They called the attention of the people to the gospel. They rang the bell that summoned them to spiritual blessings, as we see in the next verse.

On the nature of miracles, see under 8 : 16, 17.

Success. 25. **And there followed him great multitudes.**[4] "Imagine, if you can, the condition of a country in which there are no doctors, where the healing art is only practised by a few quacks, who rely more on charms than on physic for their cures. Such is now, and such was Palestine in our Lord's day. Until the medical missionaries were sent by several English societies, there was not a physician in the land, and even now there are very few. In such a country as this, with sick and crippled in every village, picture the eager excitement when the news spread that there is a good physician arrived in town; that he has healed a fierce demoniac by a word, and a great fever by a touch."[5]

Decapolis. (*Ten cities.*) In the northeastern part of Palestine, east of the Sea of Galilee and the upper Jordan.

Practical Suggestions. 1. If we would succeed in saving men, we must (1) preach the word of God with the authority of divine truth and of our experience; (2) we must teach, train, instruct; (3) we must confirm the Word by good deeds, helping the poor, visiting the sick, cheering the despondent, aiding the unfortunate, comforting the lonely, looking out on every side for some one whom we can help, and whose burdens we can bear. Thus we can prove the strength and the sincerity of our efforts to save men's souls.

2. Jesus Christ is living now and is working through his people in the same directions as when visible on earth. As he promised his disciples (John 14: 12), he is healing more sick, opening more blind eyes, binding up more broken-hearted than he did in Palestine 1800 years ago.

The gospel multiplies friends, and sympathy, and aid to the sick.

It inspires the spirit which builds hospitals and asylums, and provides every possible means for relieving distress, especially of the poor and friendless.

It cultivates, encourages, and makes possible the true science, which is discovering the nature

[1] Cambridge Bible. [2] Prof. M. R. Vincent.

[3] Thayer's *Greek Lexicon.*

[4] R. F. Horton's *Cartoons of St. Mark,* "The Cartoon of Healing;" Whittier's *Poems,* "The Master;" Trumbull's *Studies in Oriental Social Life,* "Calls for Healing in the East." An example is given in Mark Twain's *Innocents Abroad,* pp. 147, 148.

[5] H. D. Tristram, LL. D., in *Sunday-School Times.*

of disease, and the true remedies, skill in nursing and surgery, and the triumphs of modern medical investigation.

The gospel conquers disease by giving victory to the soul. God makes all things work together for good to those that love him. He manifests his own especial presence. He gives larger and sweeter spiritual life. He gives new experiences and revelations of his goodness. God may sometimes now work wonders of healing. And whenever in answer to prayer he guides to the right physicians and the right means of cure, he as really heals men as if he worked a miracle of healing. The tree that grows from the seed is as truly a work of God as if created at once by a word.

> "The healing of his seamless dress
> Is by our beds of pain,
> We touch him in life's throng and press,
> And we are whole again."

SECTION VII. CHAPTERS 5–7.

THE SERMON ON THE MOUNT. THE PRINCIPLES OF THE KINGDOM.

We now come to one of the most marked epochs in the development of the ministry of Jesus.

This sermon was delivered after the call of Matthew described in 9: 9, so that he could report from what he heard, and perhaps recorded at the time.

Whether it was all delivered at the same time, or is a collection of the sayings of Jesus spoken at different times, is uncertain. But Jesus, like every great teacher, repeated his great truths on different occasions and to different audiences as well as frequently to his own disciples. So that he may well have spoken them all at this time, and also in parts at various other times.

This sermon is only a part of the teachings of Christ, not his complete doctrine. There is much that he taught, especially about the way of attaining the state they describe, which could not be given till later on in his ministry.

THE TIME was about the central point of his ministry, the summer of his second year, A. D. 28.

THE PLACE was on a mountain near the Sea of Galilee.

According to tradition, it was the Horns of Hattîn, or Mount of Beatitudes, a square-shaped hill, about sixty feet in height, with two tops, near the centre of the west coast of the Sea of Galilee, two or three miles from the sea, and seven southwest from Capernaum.

A NIGHT OF PRAYER. — From Luke 6: 12, we learn that the new epoch in the development of Christ's kingdom was preceded and ushered in by a night of special prayer. Although to Jesus prayer was daily bread, vital air, the gate of heaven, yet there were times when battles were to be fought, great questions to be settled, guidance given, power to be received, when eternal issues depended on the decisions of the hour; at these seasons Jesus would be a long time alone with his Father, in closest communion and earnest prayer (Luke 3: 21, 22; Mark 1: 35).

THE SELECTION OF TWELVE APOSTLES, *for instruction and training for the great work of building up his kingdom.* — Luke 6: 12–16. For the names of the apostles, and their characteristics, see chapter 10: 2–4.

THE THEME. — This sermon has been called, —

Jesus' Inaugural Address (*Maclaren*).

The Great Opening Lecture in a Course of Instruction (*American Com.*).

The Great Charter of Christianity (*Tait*).

Laws of Christ for Common Life (*Dale*).

Christ's Biography, A Portrait of the Ideal Man; "The Beatitudes and the Sermon on the Mount are Christ's biography. Every syllable he had already written down in deeds. He has only to translate his life into language." — *Wm. Burnet Wright, D. D.*

The Great Fundamental Principles of the Kingdom of Heaven, without which it is impossible to belong to that kingdom. The inhabitants of heaven live according to these principles as naturally as they breathe; and when all the people of earth do the same, heaven will be on earth, and the city of God will have come "down from God, prepared as a bride adorned for her husband." [1]

THE PLAN is radiate, rather than vertebrate. Each precept is a line in the portrait of the ideal man

[1] There are many excellent books on the Sermon on the Mount. Among the very best are: *Studies in Mountain Instruction*, George D. Boardman, D. D.; *Master and Men*, Rev. William Burnet Wright, D. D.; *The Master's Blesseds*, a devotional study of the Beatitudes, J. R. Miller, D. D.; *The Kingdom*, George D. Boardman, D. D.; *The Great Charter of Christ*, Bp. W. Boyd Carpenter; *The Charter of Christianity*, Canon Andrew Tait, LL. D.; *Laws of Christ for Common Life*, Rev. R. W. Dale, LL. D.; *Law of Love and Love as Law*, Pres. Mark Hopkins, LL. D.; Prof. Shailer Matthews' *The Social Teaching of Jesus*, Trench's *Augustine on the Sermon on the Mount.*

in God's kingdom, and all are so drawn as to complete the picture. The connection is not so much with one another, as with the picture as a whole.[1]

1. The Beatitudes, the inner spirit of the heavenly life; the principles, the source, the fountain, whence right conduct flows. 5: 1–10.
2. This Spirit tested by Persecution. 5: 11, 12.
3. This Spirit expressed, as salt and light. 5: 13–16.
4. The truth shown by contrast of the new with the old, and its misinterpretation. 5: 17–48.
5. Applications to the Religious Life. 6: 1–18.
   - A Lesson on Almsgiving.
   - A Lesson on Prayer.
   - A Lesson on Forgiveness.
   - A Lesson on Fasting.
6. Applications to the Aim and Purpose of Life. 6: 19–34.
   - The supreme choice (1) of Treasure, (2) of a Master.
   - Helps toward a right choice.
7. Guards against Insidious Dangers to the Religious Spirit. 7: 1–6.
   - Judging others. Motes and Beams. Pearls and Swine.
8. The Means of obtaining and sustaining the New Life. 7: 7–11.
9. The Golden Rule. 7: 12.
10. Persuasives toward entering the New Life. 7: 13, 14.
11. Tests for Ourselves and Others. 7: 15–27.
    - How to know who really belong to the Kingdom.

The following Analysis is given by Rev. E. P. Burtt in a recent *Biblical World*: —

Theme: Christianity, a Spiritual Religion.

Introduction: Its subjects congratulated. Matt. 5: 3–16.

1. Their qualities and privileges ideally expressed. 5: 3–12.
2. Scope and aim of their work indicated. 5: 13–16.

I. Relation to the Jewish Religion. 5: 17–48.

1. Continuity. 5: 17–20.
2. Superiority. 5: 21–48.
   - *a*. In its regard for others' rights. 5: 21–26.
   - *b*. In its estimate of purity. 5: 27–32.
   - *c*. In its estimate of truthfulness. 5: 33–37.
   - *d*. In its spirit of meekness. 5: 38–42.
   - *e*. In its spirit of love. 5: 43–48.

II. Its Nature. 6: 1–34.

1. Spiritual, as opposed to external, nominal religion. 6: 1–18.
   - *a*. Stated. 6: 1.
   - *b*. Illustrated. 6: 2–18.
     - (1) Alms. 6: 2–4.
     - (2) Prayers. 6: 5–15.
     - (3) Fasts. 6: 16–18.
2. Sufficient. 6: 19–34.
   - *a*. Imperishable. 6: 19–21.
   - *b*. Essential. 6: 22–25.
   - *c*. Involves all lesser good. 6: 26–34.

III. Application. 7: 1–12.

This spiritual religion demands:

1. Charitableness. 7: 1–5.
2. Wise use of holy things. 7: 6.
3. Prayerfulness. 7: 7–11.
4. Ethical perfection. 7: 12.

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[1] Compare Ruskin's statement as to his own writings, — not like cherries tied, as in Pomona, in orderly rows on a stick for convenience of carrying, but in clusters as they grow on their stalk, to be gathered by handfuls. *Modern Painters*, Part IV., ch. 1.

IV. Closing Appeal. 7: 13-27.
1. Invitation. 7: 13-14.
2. Warning against false teachers. 7: 15-23.
3. Issues of obedience and disobedience. 7: 24-27.

CHAPTER 5.

Section VII. — The Principles of the Kingdom of Heaven.

1. The Seven Beatitudes; The Inner Spirit, vers. 1-9.
2. The Eighth Beatitude; The Spirit Tested, vers. 10-12.
3. The Spirit expressed, vers. 13-16.
4. The Truth made clear by the Old, and by Contrast with False Interpretations of the Old, vers. 17-48.

Time.
Midsummer, A. D. 28.

Place.
A mountain near the Sea of Galilee.

1 And seeing the multitudes,[q] he went up into [a]the mountain: and when he [r]was set, had sat down, his disciples came unto him:
2 And[s] he opened his mouth, and taught them, saying,
3 [t] Blessed [are][u] the poor[v] in spirit: for[w] theirs is the kingdom of heaven.

q ch. 15. 29. *r* Luke 4. 20. *s* Ps. 78. 2. Acts 8. 35 & 10. 34, *al.* *t* For ver. 3-12, cp. Luke 6. 20-23. *u* Cp. Isai. 61. 1 & 66. 2. *v* Cp. ch. 11. 29. *w* Cp. Luke 12. 32.

I. THE BEATITUDES, vers. 1-10.

These are to the whole sermon what the Salon Carré is to the whole Louvre of Paris, — a small room, containing the choicest pictures, the gems of art.

1. **And seeing the multitudes**, described in ver. 25 above. **He went up.** From the level place on the mountain (Luke 6: 12, 17), where the people were gathered, to a slight elevation, from which he could more easily be seen and heard by them. **Into a mountain.**[1] The mountain, a well-known place. **When he was set.** "This was the custom of the Jewish doctors, who taught sitting in token of their authority."[2] **His disciples**, the twelve, **came unto him.** They gathered close to him, while the multitude were farther off, but within hearing.

2. **And taught them, saying.** We will first study the Beatitudes in detail, and then consider them as a whole.

THE FIRST BEATITUDE.

3. **Blessed.** "Blessedness is the express symbol of happiness identified with character." It is more than "happiness," the joy that happens to us, that comes from without. It is the joy that grows out of the soul itself, a part of its very nature, increased by happy outward surroundings, and perfect only in them as in heaven, but indestructible by any outward power. Happiness is heat reflected from without. Blessedness is a fire within, that sheds light and warmth whatever the weather outside.

The Hebrew equivalent in Delitzsch's Hebrew New Testament is the same as "blessed" in Ps. 1. It is in the plural number to express the manifold nature of the blessedness, at all times, from all sources, in all departments of life, in all circumstances; blessed in body and in soul, in time and in eternity.

The Character that is Blessed. **Are the poor in spirit.** Those who are conscious of their sin and need and spiritual incompleteness, so that they seek the aid that can come only from God, "and kneel at heaven's gate for heaven's supplies." Poverty of spirit is the opposite of pride, self-righteousness, self-conceit. It is the same spirit that is required when we are told that we must become as little children if we would enter into the kingdom: willing and anxious to learn, to ask, to seek. It is forgetfulness of self

[1] Ruskin's *Modern Painters*, vol. iii., chap. xiv., § 10, on the sanctity of mountains.

[2] Jacobus.

4 Blessed [are / are] [x] they that mourn: for they shall be comforted.

x Isai. 61. 2, 3. John 16. 20. 2 Cor. 1. 7 & 7. 10. Rev. 21. 4. Cp. James 4. 9, 10.

in the service of God and man. Blessedness, like wisdom, —

"Is ofttimes nearer when we stoop,
Than when we soar."

It is not mere poverty in worldly goods, though that often leads to this spirit.[1] But one may be poor and proud. It is not poverty of mental faculties and gifts. It is no mean, abject feeling; no Uriah Heep humbleness, — no want of self-respect, no apologizing for one's existence, no cringing before man.

THE REWARD. **For theirs is the kingdom of heaven.** Not chiefly a locality, but the character, or state, where God rules, where every excellence and glory of heaven prevails, where all feelings, all deeds, all hopes, all purposes, are heavenly, where every perfection is at home. It is heaven on earth. It is heaven for evermore.

To the poor in spirit belongs this kingdom, because they only are in a condition to receive it. They only really want it and seek it with all their hearts. They only have the heavenly spirit begun in them. It is a present as well as future blessing. Pride, conceit, self-esteem, selfishness, lock and bar the door to heaven and heavenly blessedness. But the poor in spirit have entered the door like children, and live henceforth in the kingdom of heaven.

THE SECOND BEATITUDE.

THE CHARACTER. 4. **Blessed are they that mourn.** "The Greek (πενθοῦντες) signifies grief *manifested;* too deep for concealment."[2] (1) "This is an absolute promise to all those who *in the kingdom of heaven* are brought into the experience of mourning, and is to be interpreted by such passages as Rom. 5: 3-5; Heb. 12: 11; and Rev. 7: 14;"[3] those who are in great tribulation for Christ's sake. (2) But chiefly the blessing refers to those who mourn over ignorance and sin, both in themselves and in others, who feel the sorrows of others, who realize the sins and needs of the world lying in wickedness.

THE REWARD. **For they shall be comforted.** An echo of Isai. 61: 1-3. The Greek word for comfort means *called to one's side* for aid, strength, encouragement, consolation. It is the word from which one title of the Holy Spirit is derived, "The Comforter." Our word "comfort" is derived from two Latin words, *con*, together, and *fortis*, strong, *made strong together*. It is not the taking away altogether of sorrow, but transforming and transfiguring it, and compelling it to bestow blessings otherwise impossible. It is not so much soothing as strengthening, inspiring, invigorating. It is the imparting of courage and fresh life.[4]

AN EXAMPLE OF COMFORTING. How did the Holy Spirit, the promised Comforter, comfort the disciples after the death of Christ? "The eleven frightened men, who had been scattered as sheep without a shepherd, became lions; Peter, who a few days before had lied in terror of a maid-servant, stood firm, immovable, before the magnates who had crucified his Master." They all received strength, hope, assurance, light, courage. They were changed into heroes. And the death of Christ, over which they had mourned, became the power of God for the salvation of the world. Thus they were comforted.

HOW THEY SHALL BE COMFORTED. The comfort comes from the divine grace shining on the mourning, as the rainbow on the drops of rain. Each one shall be comforted according to that for which he mourns. "If we mourn in poverty of spirit for the deepest reason, namely, sin, then the sweet assurance of pardon and the infusing of power to overcome our sin bring comfort, compared with which the stanching of other wounds is poor."[5]

Those who mourn for the sins of the world shall be comforted, for that state of heart most impels and best fits us to save men from sin; and the labors for that end shall be successful; the world shall be redeemed; the kingdom shall come; and then every one who mourned over the sin of the world will rejoice "with joy unspeakable and full of glory."

God comforts those that mourn by giving forgiveness, and insight, and larger hearts, and purer consciences, desire to relieve, courage and hope and heroism in relieving. Every noblest power of the soul is enlarged.

Those who mourn in the sicknesses, cares, burdens, and losses of which life is so full can find in Jesus a comfort beyond all expression.

He comforts us in our sorrows by making them work out good, ennobling the character, enlarging the sympathy and the power of helping others.

He comforts us also by revealing the world be-

[1] The Emperor Julian mockingly said that he wished to confiscate the property of Christians in order that, as poor men, they might enter the kingdom of heaven. — *Am. Com.*

[2] Prof. M. R. Vincent.

[3] Lyman Abbott.

[4] See Aldis Wright's *Bible Word Book*, pp. 146, 147, for examples of this use; also Wm. Burnet Wright's *Master and Man*, on "Comfort."

[5] Maclaren.

5 Blessed [are] [y] the meek: for they shall inherit the earth.
6 Blessed [are] they [which do that] hunger and [z] thirst [a] after righteousness: for they shall be filled.

y Ps. 37. 11. *z* Ps. 42. 2. Isai. 55. 1, 2. John 7. 37. *a* 2 Tim. 2. 22. Cp. ch. 6. 33.

yond this, for which all this hard training is preparing us. God will make all our sorrows to work out good to us (Rom. 8: 28), and when we see God's meaning and God's results we will be comforted. Many of the best blessings can come in no other way. He that never mourns for himself and others is narrow, and dull, and blind.

THE THIRD BEATITUDE.

CHARACTER. 5. **Blessed are the meek.** The *Century Dictionary* defines "meek" as "gentle or mild of temper; self-controlled and gentle; not easily provoked or irritated; forbearing under injury or annoyance." "Christian meekness is a converted wolf," says Dr. J. R. Miller. It is "the soft answer that turneth away wrath." It is the unselfishness which forgets self in the desire to help others. It is the doing good to enemies. It lives in the serene heights of an angel dealing with a passionate child. This is meekness toward man.

Webster defines meekness as "submission to the divine will; patience and gentleness from moral and religious motives," with the emphasis on the last words. This is meekness toward God. Its root lies in the control of all earthly tempers by the spirit. It implies great faith and great self-control. It is not a weak, but an heroic quality. "He that is slow to anger is better than the mighty, and he that ruleth his spirit than he that taketh a city" (Prov. 16: 32; comp. 19: 11).

CHRIST'S EXAMPLE. The meek Christ drove out the moneychangers from the Temple. He had perfect control of his temper. He was meek when Judas betrayed him, and when he stood before Pilate.

So Moses, in his management of the Israelites.

THE REWARD. **For they shall inherit the earth.** This earth. (1) They get the most out of the world and all its good things. Passion and revenge are unhappy feelings. Trust in God, control of temper, shed peace and happiness over everything. Every earthly blessing has a heavenly flavor. "It is because of the special connection of meekness with contentment that it is promised that the meek shall 'inherit the earth.' Neither covetous men nor the grave can inherit anything; they can but consume. Only contentment can possess."[1] (2) The meek have a surer title to their earthly possessions; they are less likely to be dispossessed by enemies; they are apt to live longer than the passionate and revengeful. (3) Christ's kingdom, whose members are characterized by meekness, is yet to possess the whole earth. The final and lasting conquest of the earth will be not by force of arms, not through worldly conquerors, not by force of intellect, nor by political shrewdness, but by the spiritual power of the meek, by the gospel of the meek and lowly Jesus.

THE FOURTH BEATITUDE.

THE CHARACTER. 6. **They which do hunger and thirst after righteousness.** Hunger and thirst are the sharpest spurs to action.

> "Traverse the desert, and then you can tell
> What treasures exist in the cold, deep well.
> Sink in despair on the red, parched earth,
> And then you may reckon what water is worth.
> The gnawing of hunger's worm is past,
> But fiery thirst lives on to the last."[2]

Here the Master "declares in a figure that those whose strongest desire is for goodness shall be satisfied." All great good is gained through intense desires for that good. He that is not hungry cannot grow strong. He is sick, and nigh unto death. Appetite is a sign of health. He that does not hunger after knowledge, — universities and libraries cannot fill him with knowledge.

The hunger is for *righteousness*, to be like Christ, like God, to be pure, honest, loving, free from every stain of sin, every imperfection, cost what it may. Riches, success, pleasure, popularity, must be of small value in comparison. Men think they want to go to heaven. But do they really hunger, not for a beautiful place free from pain and filled with joys, but for the heavenly life, the heavenly spirit, all that is essential to heaven?

THE REWARD. **For they shall be filled,** not by the destruction of the desire, but by its satisfaction. The Greek word for filled is "a very strong and graphic word, originally applied to the feeding and fattening of animals in a stall. Used also of the multitudes fed with the loaves and fishes. (Matt. 14: 20.) It expresses *complete satisfaction*."[3]

Filled with that for which they hunger, right-

[1] Ruskin, *Modern Painters*, vol. v., "The Hesperid Æglé."

[2] Eliza Cook.

[3] Prof. M. R. Vincent, *Word Studies*.

7 Blessed [are] [b] the merciful: for they shall obtain mercy.
8 Blessed [are] [c] the pure in heart: for [d] they shall see God.

b Matt. 18. 33 & 25. 34–36. Prov. 19. 17. Luke 6. 36. 2 Tim. 1. 16. Heb. 6. 10. *c* Ps. 24. 4. 2 Tim. 2. 22. Cp. 1 Pet. 1. 22. *d* Heb. 12. 14. 1 John 3. 2, 3. Rev. 22. 4. Cp. 1 Cor. 13. 12.

eousness.[1] But this really includes every lesser good, in the only way in which the hunger and thirst for them can be satisfied. Without God and his righteousness, worldly things cannot satisfy the soul. They are like the waters of the sea, the more you drink the thirstier you are:

"Dropping buckets into empty wells
And growing old in drawing nothing up."

Even the wants of our physical nature are not perfectly satisfied except through God and his righteousness. Our food is not perfect unless we eat and drink to the glory of God, and have with it not only "the feast of reason and the flow of soul," but the flow of gratitude and love. Our natural wants must be transfigured to be perfect. Jesus transforms the whole life, and makes the desert to blossom like the rose.

Life is a series of desires, and their satisfaction.

The greatness of any being is measured (1) by the number of his desires and hungers; (2) by their quality; (3) by their capacity, intensity. Civilization, religion, progress, goodness, always increase the hungerings of the soul.

Each desire is a cup which it is possible to fill. The civilized man is higher than the savage because he has more and better desires. He has more strings to his harp, more stops to his organ, and better music is possible. The true Christian has still more hungerings, and the highest and best of all is to be perfectly righteous, to be like God, to have the beauty of holiness.

Heaven is not the quiet of Nirvana, but larger vision, more and purer desires to be satisfied. You can not be satisfied without the *desires*. Every time we thirst after righteousness, and the thirst is satisfied, we have a larger vision of what righteousness is, a more heavenly thirst, and a larger, fuller, sweeter satisfaction.

All our growth is by means of these desires and their satisfaction. Contentment is not indifference, not deadness of desire; but contentment "with such things as we have," which includes God and heaven, and the Holy Spirit, all divine influences and all the possibilities of our nature. To be content without these is to be content with infinitely less than we have.

THE FIFTH BEATITUDE.

THE CHARACTER. 7. **Blessed are the merciful.** Those who have hungered after righteousness will express that desire toward men in acts of mercy. Mercy is near of kin to *love*. It is love to the needy, the troubled, the sinful, even those who have wronged us. It relieves spiritual want and darkness as well as temporal; would give the gospel to the heathen as well as food to the hungry. It is an active virtue. It is opposed to unkind and harsh judgment of others.[2]

THE REWARD. **For they shall obtain mercy.** From man and from God. Like begets like. The echo is like the original voice. But most of all do we need God's mercy. And showing mercy to others proves that we have a state of heart which makes it safe for God to forgive us. For him to forgive the unmerciful would be to multiply sins and wrongs.

"The quality of mercy is not strained;
It droppeth as the gentle rain from heaven
Upon the place beneath; it is twice bless'd:
It blesseth him that gives, and him that takes." [3]

THE SIXTH BEATITUDE.

THE CHARACTER. 8. **Blessed are the pure in heart.** Pure, sincere, unmixed with evil or imperfection in motive, purpose, and love. Trench makes it correspond with "simple" in its original meaning of simplex, *sine plica*, without fold. It is also "sincere," *i. e.*, *sine cera*, without wax, honey pure, without any particles of wax. But most modern etymologists derive "sin" from *sim* (Latin *simul*), altogether, and *cerus* from the same root as the English *sheer*, pure, clear; hence wholly, altogether clear. "The beatitude is not for the sinless, but for sinners forgiven. The pure are those who have been purified, — their robes washed white in the blood of the Lamb, 'as white as snow.'"[4]

"Gold is pure when it has been separated by fire from all foreign matter. The diamond is pure, the crystal is pure, when there is nothing in them which hinders the refraction and reflection of light." The heart is pure when it loves only the good, when all its motives are right, all its desires are for the good and true.[5]

[1] "Still through our paltry stir and strife
Glows down the wished ideal,
And *longing* moulds in clay, what life
Carves in the marble real."
LOWELL.

[2] Longfellow's *Tales of a Wayside Inn*, "The Legend Beautiful;" *The Colony of Mercy;* Drummond's *Greatest Thing in the World;* Hood's *Poems*, "Charity;" "Doing Good," in Foster's *Cyclopedia of Poetry*, 905.

[3] *Merchant of Venice.* [4] J. R. Miller.

[5] The poem "Beautiful Snow," in *The Snow Flake Album.* Ruskin's *Modern Painters*, vol. v., "The Law of Help."

9 Blessed [are / are] [e] the peacemakers: for [f] they shall be called [g] [the children / sons] of God.
10 [h] Blessed [are / are] they [which are / that have been] persecuted for righteousness' sake: for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.
11 [i] Blessed are ye when *men* shall [revile / reproach] you, and persecute [you / you,] and [shall] say all manner of evil against you falsely,[j] for my sake.

e James 3. 18. *f* 1 John 3. 1. *g* Rom. 8. 14. *h* 2 Tim. 2. 12. James 5. 11. 1 Pet. 3. 14. *i* Heb. 11. 26. 1 Pet. 4. 14. *j* John 15. 21.

THE REWARD. **For they shall see God.** There must be a likeness of nature and feeling, in order to understand another. So only the pure can *see* a pure God. The impure, the bad, cannot even *see* him, much less enjoy him. They do not understand his nature. They do not know the meaning of his character. They are color-blind. The selfish do not believe that unselfish love exists. The vile do not believe there is real purity.

When do we see God? Not only in heaven, but here and now. Just as far as any one is pure he sees God. What a privilege this is, to see God, his goodness, his glory, his love! How it enlarges the vision, widens the horizon, and expands the soul! What an ideal it sets before us! "The words of the dying Kingsley," says Dr. Tait, "find an echo in every Christian heart, 'How beautiful is God!'"[1]

THE SEVENTH BEATITUDE.

THE CHARACTER. 9. **Blessed are the peacemakers.** "The founders and promoters of peace."[2] The exact opposite of the quarrelsome, the passionate, the fighters, the faultfinders, the murmurers; and also those who are indifferent whether there is peace or not. (1) Those who try to reconcile men at variance. (2) Those who try to bring peace to the restless and troubled. (3) Those who, from this same disposition, seek, like their Master, to reconcile men to God, to bring divine peace into sinful souls by leading them to the Prince of Peace.

Dr. Maclaren says: "It is the last outcome of all the preceding graces. The other steps must have been climbed before we stand on the summit. Christ's peacemakers must have the peace they bring. Inward tranquillity is won by passing through the preceding stages."

This does not mean that we are not to oppose that which is wrong or disturb the quiet of corruption and crime. Nothing is settled till it is settled right. There can be no peace to the wicked. Our first duty therefore is, at any cost of disturbance, to get things where peace is possible. So the gospel, Matt. 10: 34, but always with peace as the object.[3]

THE REWARD. **They shall be called the children** (better, sons, full grown) **of God.** Because they are like their Father. They inherit his nature, and, being children, are also heirs of God, of his home, his joy, his blessings, his love. God is ever seeking to bring peace to men. The very song of the angels at the birth of Christ was "Peace on earth." Jesus and the Holy Spirit are ever seeking to reconcile men to God. The gospel ever brings peace, restoring the lost harmony of the soul with God and with nature and with itself. The reign of the gospel will be the reign of peace.

II. THE GREAT TEST.

A beatitude for those who suffer because they obey the above beatitudes.

THE EIGHTH BEATITUDE. 10–12.

THE CHARACTER. 10. **Blessed are they which are persecuted for righteousness' sake,** as those are sure to be who try to live up to these Beatitudes, and promulgate them in an evil world. Blessed are they who are such positive factors in making the world good that they arouse the hatred and opposition of bad men, as described in ver. 11.

Note that there are two conditions. (1) It must be *for righteousness' sake* . . . (ver. 11) **for my** (Christ's) **sake.** So far as we use bad methods, or censorious language, or passion, or false denunciations, we lose the blessing. Many a person has been persecuted more for his un-Christly way of reform than for the reform itself. (2) It must be **falsely.** The charges against us must be untrue. Persecution and suffering in themselves do not inherit the blessing.

THE REWARD. **For theirs is the kingdom of heaven.**

[1] See Prof. Drummond's *Natural Law in the Spiritual World*, where he shows that a lower order of being can have no possible comprehension of a higher. Prof. Thomson's illustration of "He that hath ears to hear, let him hear," in his *Parables and Their Home*, p. 3. 'Una' in Spenser's *Faerie Queene*. Milton's *Comus*. Sir Galahad in Tennyson's *Holy Grail*. The little booklet, *The Sister's Dream of Heaven*.

[2] Prof. M. R. Vincent.

[3] Ruskin's *Modern Painters*, vol. v., "Peace," is capital; so is Longfellow's *Poems*, "The Arsenal at Springfield" and "The Christmas Bells."

12 [k] Rejoice, and be exceeding glad: for great [is] your reward in heaven: for [l] so persecuted they the prophets which were before you.

k Acts 5. 41. Rom. 5. 3. 1 Pet. 4. 13. 2 Cor. 12. 10. Col. 1. 11, 24. Heb. 10. 34. James 1. 2. l See ch. 21. 35.

12. **Great is your reward in heaven.** After the battle comes the crown of victory, after faithfulness in doing well comes the benediction, Well done; enter into the joy of your Lord. Only those who have fought in the battle can join in the triumph. Only those who have done well can receive the "well done." Only those who have been faithful in the little can receive the wider kingdom. Any ship can sail on a calm sea, but these are the tested ones which are sure to reach the harbor of heaven. The completeness of the reward must of necessity be in the future. Their cause will succeed. Their endurance of persecution proves their fitness for the reward. The persecution itself developed their character, enlarged their goodness, made a higher heaven possible, and so was a present reward. Their endurance of persecution declares to the whole world the value of the religion of Jesus, the greatness of his love, the preciousness of his truth. They are insensibly moulding the character of God's people. They comfort those now suffering for righteousness' sake with the assurance that they are not suffering in vain. They are a perpetual influence for good.

For so persecuted they the prophets which were before you. This is in confirmation of the assurance of reward. The best and the greatest men, who stand highest, have suffered just as you are suffering now. Their success means your success. God's favor to them means that his favor still belongs to you. Their shining robes mean white robes for you; their crowns are the promise of your crowns.

"Upon thy brow
A wreath whose flowers no earthly soil have known,
Woven of Beatitudes."

"We desire immortality, not as the reward of virtue, but as its continuance."

"Glory of Virtue, to fight, to struggle, to right the wrong —
Nay, but she aimed not at glory, no lover of glory she:
Give her the glory of going on, and still to be." [1]

THE BEATITUDES AS A WHOLE.

I. The Relation of the Beatitudes to one another.

1. The Poor in Spirit.
(*The condition out of which all the others grow.*)

(*The inner life toward God.*)		(*Its outward manifestation toward man.*)
2. They that Mourn.		3. The Meek.
4. They that Hunger after Righteousness.		5. The Merciful.
6. The Pure in Heart.		7. The Peacemakers.

8. The Persecuted.

Those who live such a life in this evil world are often persecuted, and must always be ready to endure this test. They who do stand the test will have these virtues in a high degree, and have the fuller blessedness of them all.

Poor in spirit is the necessary condition, the soil in which the others grow. It is "the trunk of the tree, of which the others are the branches;" the hall of the house, of which the others are the rooms.

The first column shows the natural development and progress of the inner life.

The second column shows the similar development of the outward life.

Correspondences. Each characteristic in the second column is the natural expression of its corresponding inner life, given in the first column.

II. The Making of a Saint.

The first three Beatitudes expressing the inner principles, the fourth the endeavors after moral perfection, the other three some of the results in life.

The first step.	*The second degree.*	*Third degree.*	*Fourth degree.*	*The test.*
Poor in spirit mourning over sin.	Meekness, the first step expressed in life.	Hunger after righteousness. Mercy its outward expression.	Purity. Peace.	Persecuted.

The result.

By the *sevenfold* character thus set forth, a *complete* character is depicted, and by the *sevenfold* blessedness attached to it, a *perfect* blessedness is intended. All rays together make the perfect glory.

[1] Tennyson.

13 ¶ Ye are the salt of the earth: *m* but if the salt have lost [his, its] savour, wherewith shall it be salted? it is thenceforth good for nothing, but to be cast out and [to be] trodden under foot of men.

m Mark 9. 50. Luke 14. 34.

III. Active, Heroic Virtues. Dr. George D. Boardman, in his *Kingdom of Heaven*, pp. 59-61, shows beautifully that these virtues are masculine as well as feminine, positive more than negative, heroic graces full of courage, pluck, energy, conquest. "For every one man who illustrates the Beatitudes there are a hundred who illustrate their opposites. They are the very essence and pith of genuine manhood. It is the fashion to talk about 'muscular Christianity.' I will declare what requires Christian muscle — it is the living up to the Beatitudes. . . . The conquering forces in Christ's kingdom, for time and for eternity, are precisely these beatific graces."

IV. The Heart of Reformation. Here is found the only true method by which the needed moral revolution can be realized. "What men needed first was a change, not in their circumstances, but in themselves. Blessedness, Jesus affirmed, comes not from outward conditions, but from inward states. It consists not in positions, but in dispositions." Reformers try in vain "to construct a stable and happy community from persons who are selfish, weak, and miserable. Their first cry is: 'Get your circumstances changed.' Christ's first call was: 'Get yourselves changed, and the things that stand around you will be changed.' When the torch is lighted, even the dark crystals in the cavern will sparkle."[1]

V. Cause and Effect. Each "blessed" is an effect, of which the character described is a cause.

Thus in the words of Dr. W. B. Wright: "The Beatitudes are NOT ARBITRARY ENACTMENTS. God himself cannot change them. While a man hates his brother, God cannot make him happy. Omnipotence cannot give us peace while we hug the worm that does not die, and wrap ourselves in the flame that is not quenched."

The rewards are rewards of character, not of any outward condition. They grow out of the characters to which they are attached, as naturally as peaches grow on a peach-tree or roses blossom on a rose-bush. There are no other trees on which these blessings will grow, except the ones named in the first part of each of the Beatitudes. Grapes will not grow upon thistles.

VI. Comparisons. (1) The Beatitudes are the sevenfold rainbow around the throne of God. (2) They are the Beautiful Gate of the Temple of Holiness. (3) They are a training school for the kingdom of heaven. (4) The first portions of each Beatitude are like a prism through which our life rays pass and by which they are changed into the corresponding rewards, all concentrating on one point, Love, the perfect character, a life like Christ's. (5) They are like "the eight-columned Propylæum of the Acropolis of the kingdom of God." (6) The Ten Commandments are negative, the Beatitudes positive. The one forbids, the other enjoins. The one was delivered on Mount Sinai, cold, bleak, barren, inaccessible, — a type of merely law morality; the other on Mount Hattîn, built of solid rock, but covered with fertile soil, beautiful with shrubs and trees, a picture of the morality of the gospel of love.

III. THE SPIRIT EXPRESSED; or THE RELATION OF THE CITIZENS OF GOD'S KINGDOM TO THE WORLD AROUND THEM, vers. 13-16.

First. The Relation of Salt. 13. **Ye**, the citizens of the kingdom of God, ye who are trying to live the life and possess the characters just described. **Are the salt of the earth**, the preservers of the earth, as the ten righteous men would have saved even Sodom (Gen. 18 : 23-32). Salt seasons food, and preserves it from corruption, so that it can give life to men. Salt cleanses, and sweetens, and gives wholesome flavor to human existence.

(1) Their whole spirit, teachings, lives, and influence counteract, are antiseptic to, the unrighteousness which is the great destroyer of individuals and nations. The ancient civilizations have perished by this poison. Greece and Rome did not fall until they were permeated with unrighteousness. And if ever Macaulay's vision of "some traveller from New Zealand" who "shall, in the midst of a vast solitude, stand on a broken arch of London Bridge to sketch the ruins of St. Paul's," or on Brooklyn Bridge to sketch the ruins of New York, it will be because of unrighteousness alone. The righteous leaven the community. They are a positive preserving force. They make war even to death with evil. I have heard that Robert Ingersoll said that if he had made the world he would have made health

[1] W. B. Wright in *Master and Men*.

14 "Ye are the light of the world. A city [that is] set on [an] hill cannot be hid.

n Eph. 5. 8. Phil. 2. 15. Cp. John 8. 12.

catching and not disease. But it is true now that in a wide view health is more contagious; that goodness has more power to change a people than evil has. A few earnest, determined, righteous men can leaven the nation. Salt has a mission. It is active. It permeates society and purifies, sweetens, flavors it.

(2) They are the salt of the earth by spreading the truth of the gospel, by proclaiming Jesus Christ to all the world. "Salt in a barrel is of no use to anybody; it must be brought into contact with the objects which it is to preserve and to purify."[1] **But if the salt have lost his savour**, its saltness, that which gives it its preserving power, and becomes a mere form. "There is a whole sermon in the definitions of the Greek word for *have lost its savour*, μωρανθῇ, the kindred noun of which means first, *dull, sluggish;* then *stupid, silly;* then *insipid, flat.* These all describe a Christian who has "lost his savour."

The salt in the East is gathered with impurities, and coming in contact with the ground, loses its saltness, and "undergoes, with other substances, a chemical process by which it *becomes really another sort of stuff while retaining its old appearance.*"[2] Dr. Thomson relates similar facts.[3] This is a picture of what is possible to those who are outwardly disciples of Christ. While retaining their profession, their character is bad, their deeds are evil, their principles have evaporated, they are dead bodies without a soul. **Wherewith shall it be salted.** How can they preserve the world from ruin when they have lost all that gives them preserving power?

It is . . . good for nothing. "It cannot be used at all; and such salt soon effloresces and turns to dust — not to fruitful soil, however. It is not only good for nothing itself, but it actually destroys all fertility wherever it is thrown; and this is the reason why it is cast into the street."[4] **Cast out . . . trodden under foot.** "The sweeping out of the spoiled salt and casting it into the street are actions familiar to all men." "I have seen large quantities of it literally thrown into the road to be trodden under foot."[4] So it is that Christians in form, without the Spirit, churches in name and ceremony, but without godliness, without Christ, without spiritual life, are not only useless, but are a positive injury to the world. They are destroyers of good, and must be cast out, despised, trodden under foot, destroyed.

Second. The Relation of Light, vers. 14–16. 14. **Ye are the light of the world.** "Salt operates *internally*, in the mass with which it comes in contact; the sunlight operates *externally*, irradiating all that it reaches. Hence Christians are warily styled 'the salt of the *earth*,' with reference to the masses of mankind with whom they are expected to mix; but 'the light of the *world*,' with reference to the vast and variegated surface which feels its fructifying and gladdening radiance."[5]

Light set in motion by life is the source of life, of beauty, of manifested reality, of warmth, comfort, and joy, of health, and of power. It destroys all darkness; it unites in itself purity and clearness. Without it the world would be but a mass of coldness and death. Now, what light does for the natural world Jesus, the Light of the world, does for the world of man, for mind, soul, and spirit. He reveals God, and heaven, and truth; he shows the way; he cheers, comforts, vivifies, renews. In the spiritual world, as in the natural, there are three kinds of rays: (1) the light rays; (2) the heat rays; (3) the chemical or life-giving rays. And the disciples of Jesus are to let the light shine which Jesus has kindled within them. "Christians," says Augustine, "are the Light *lighted;* Christ is the Light *lighting.*"

The diffusion of light in our world is caused by the reflection of the rays of the sun from the particles in the air, from the clouds, from the earth and all that is on it. Otherwise we could see only the sun, and in all other directions would be darkness. But by the dispersion of light every particle becomes a miniature sun, and the world is full of light even to those who do not live in the direct rays of the sun. It is this work which every Christian, and every Christian word or act is to do for the moral world.

A city . . . set on a hill. The city of Safed, 2650 feet above the sea, and "commanding one of the grandest panoramic views in Palestine," may have been shining in the morning sun in full view

[1] Theodore Cuyler. So Livy calls the Greeks *sal gentium*, "the salt of the nations." Dr. Van Dyke has said that God has condensed the *Whole Duty of Man* (a large volume considered indispensable to a clergyman in the last century) into one word, — Salt. "True intelligence is that which acts not as Cayenne pepper, to sting the world, but as salt, to cleanse and conserve it."

[2] Maundrell.

[3] See a very interesting illustration in Thomson's *Land and Book*, new ed., vol. ii., pp. 361–363.

[4] Thomson, *Land and Book.*

[5] Jamieson, Fausset, and Brown.

15 [o] Neither do men [men] light a candle, [lamp,] and put it under a [the] bushel, but on a candlestick; [the stand;] and it giveth light [shineth] unto all that are in the house.

16 Let [Even so let] your light [so] shine before men, [p] that they may see your good works, and [q] glorify your Father which is in heaven.

o Mark 4. 21. Luke 8. 16 & 11. 33. *p* Philem. 6. 1 Pet. 2. 12. *q* John 15. 8. 2 Cor. 9. 13. Phil. 1. 11. Cp. ch. 9. 8.

of Jesus' hearers. "In the East, cities are often built on hills for protection and for purer air. No image could so vividly set forth the calling of the Church of Christ as a visible society. For

Assyrian, Terra-cotta, and Glass Lamps.

Chaldean Lamps.

good or for evil, it could not fail to be prominent in the world's history, a city of refuge for the weary, or open to the attacks of the invader."[1]

15. **Neither do men light a candle**, rather, *a lamp*. An earthenware or metal cup in form like the engraving. **And put it under a bushel**, a wooden measure holding about a peck; a common article of household furniture. Thus the light would be hidden.[2]

How Disciples may conceal their Light. (1) By letting their light burn dim, having little spiritual life. (2) By living in an atmosphere of worldly-mindedness and the cares of the world, which are like a misty air dimming the radiance of the sun. (3) By faults and sins and disagreeable ways. (4) By not making a public profession of religion. (5) By not speaking to others of their spiritual experiences. (6) By not doing all they can to spread the light of the gospel. (7) By pride and ostentation.

But on a candlestick, rather, *lampstand*; its proper place, an elevated holder or stand, not unlike a tall candlestick, so that its light might be diffused as widely as possible.

The Church is Christ's golden candlestick with its branches. Compare the description in Zechariah's prophecy, ch. 4.

The business of Christians is to hold up the true light, to let the light shine over the world, to kindle other souls that they may shine too, till the whole world is flooded with the light of heaven. The church, each branch of the church, each heart, should be a "candle of the Lord," lighted by him; burning continually, because continually fed from the beaten oil of the sanctuary; shining in the dark places; in a candlestick of pure, solid gold, very precious, true, incorruptible, sincere all through.

16. **Let your light so shine**, as a lamp on its stand,[3] **that**, as a result, **they may see your good works.** Not contradictory to 6:1–4, for we should "distinguish between doing right in order to help others, as when one lights a beacon in order to guide the sailor; and doing right in order to be praised by others, as when one stands in the full blaze of a chandelier in order to display his own jewelry. It is one thing to shine for the sake of illuminating others, and so helping them; it is another thing to shine for the sake of illuminating ourselves, and so be seen to advantage."[4] To let the light shine is to live in accord-

Lamp with Christian Inscription.

ance with it, and let it prompt and guide the outward life.

How Disciples may let their Light shine. (1) By keeping their light brightly burning. (2) By a pure and holy life. (3) By special good deeds and self-sacrifices for others. (4) By doing

[1] Ellicott.

[2] Compare the illustration of the lamps in the tomb of Terentia, used by Jeremy Taylor, and quoted in Roger's *Reason and Faith*.

[3] See Spurgeon's *Sermons in Candles*. Phillips Brooks' *Sermons*, "The Candle of the Lord."

[4] George D. Boardman, *The Kingdom*.

17 ¶ [r] Think not that I [am come / came] to destroy [s] the law' or the prophets: I [am not come / came not] to destroy, but [t] to fulfil.

r Rom. 3. 31. s ch. 7. 12. t Cp. Rom. 10. 4 & 13. 8 & Gal. 3. 24.

all in humility, and for the Lord's sake. (5) By those qualities which show forth the beauty of holiness. (6) By a public profession of religion. (7) By doing everything possible for the salvation of men. Through churches, meetings, public testimonies, by benevolent and missionary organizations, by the Sabbath and public worship, by revivals.

And glorify, not yourselves, but **your Father which is in heaven**, whose children you are, and who is the source of all the good within you. Thus men will be led to become disciples.

Note (1) the reason why Jesus mingled among men, and would have his disciples do the same. Business, society, intercourse with men, are the candlestick by means of which the light is enabled to shine. "Too often," says Dr. Parkhurst, "the leaven is in the attic, and the meal down cellar." (2) Every Christian should be "a living epistle, known and read of all men." (3) "It is a great deal better to live a holy life than to talk about it. Lighthouses don't ring bells and fire cannon to call attention to their shining — they just shine."[1] (4) That light which shines farthest, to the heathen, to the worst sinners, shines brightest at home.

IV. THE NEW PRINCIPLES DO NOT DESTROY, BUT FULFIL, THE OLD, vers. 17–48.

17. **Think not that I am come to destroy**, to abrogate, to set aside. "The word is often employed by classical writers to denote a revolutionary destruction of existing institutions. The teaching of Jesus, so different from that of the Scribes and Pharisees, and his speaking of the kingdom of heaven as coming and at hand, while they thought they were already in it, might lead the people to think that he was abrogating the law of Moses and the Jewish commonwealth. The leaders had already accused Jesus of this (Mark 2 : 24; John 5 : 16, 18). Abrogate the law of Moses? Never! You Pharisees have abrogated it by your false interpretations and misapplications. I have come to fulfil it. My teaching tend to irreligion? Never! I am come to bring more religion and better. The nation had been founded and ordained by God. Its laws were given by God. The promises of the divine kingdom and its glory had been made to the Jews. The prophets had spoken the inspired word of God. The Messiah was to come from them. All the glory and hopes of the nation were built on the law and the prophets. If these were destroyed, the nation would pass into oblivion. God's promises would fail. The sun would be blotted out of the heavens. It is no wonder that the Jews were sensitive on this point. And wrong impressions concerning the mission of Jesus would prejudice the people against his teaching, and his claim to be the Messiah. For how could one really sent from God destroy what God himself had said and done? **The law.** The entire law, ceremonial, civil, and moral, the foundation of the Jewish nation. **The prophets.** The truths and principles which they taught from God. The two words included the whole Old Testament. **I am not come to destroy**, καταλῦσαι, to loosen, to dissolve, to cause to go to pieces, **but to fulfil.** My work is not a revolution, but an evolution. Every command, every ceremonial and ritual, every ordinance, I am to fulfil by retaining its spirit, its teaching, the purpose for which it was given, and developing it, making it accomplish more perfectly that for which it was given. So a sketch is not destroyed but fulfilled when its outlines are filled in to make a perfect picture. So a seed is not destroyed when the germ begins to grow, throws away its husk, absorbs the material of the seed, and becomes a tree. This is the fulfilling of the seed. The full-blown rose does not destroy, but fulfils the rosebud. The tulip fulfils the bulb. The butterfly fulfils the caterpillar. The college fulfils the grammar school. The man fulfils the boy.[2]

Evil of destroying without fulfilling. The true reformer is one who gives his attention chiefly to building up better things, not to destroying the old. It is easy to find fault. It requires neither talent nor goodness to tear down; it requires both to build up. Destroying all the weeds in a field is of little account unless good seed is planted; and the weeds are best destroyed in the act of culturing the good crop.

Sahara is a region where there is destroying without fulfilling. A garden, an orchard, a park, are places where the seeming destruction, as of weeds and wild growth, and uneven surfaces, permit the real fulfilment.

How Christ fulfilled the Law and the Prophets. 1. He put a deeper, fuller meaning in the moral law. He showed how it extended to the motives and feelings. He showed the principle at the basis of each law. An outward

[1] Dwight L. Moody.

[2] Compare Whately's *Annotations on Bacon's Essays*, "Innovations." Whittier's *Poems*, "Chapel of the Hermits."

18 For verily I say unto you, [u] Till heaven and earth pass away, one jot or one tittle shall in no wise pass away from the law, till all be fulfilled. things be accomplished.

19 [v] Whosoever therefore shall break [w] one of these least commandments, and shall teach men so, he shall be called the least [x] in the kingdom of heaven: but whosoever shall do and teach them, the same them, he shall be called great [x] in the kingdom of heaven.

u Luke 16. 17. Cp. ch. 24. 35. *v* Cp. 1 Cor. 3. 12–15. *w* Cp. Gal. 3. 10 & James 2. 10. *x* ch. 11. 11 & 18. 1–4.

act is of small account unless it proceeds from the right motives.

2. He implanted the new heart and the love which will result in the perfect keeping of the law. He made it as natural for man to do right as for an angel. It becomes not a form, but a second nature.

3. He fulfilled the whole ceremonial law. He retained all that they foreshadowed and taught, but in a far more perfect way. The Passover was fulfilled in the sacrifice of Christ, and its form, in the Lord's supper. The Temple was fulfilled in the Church, the temple of the living God.

4. He fulfilled the prophets, by realizing the Messiah and the kingdom which they foretold; by accomplishing the work of redemption which they began; by living that which they typified; by accomplishing spiritually what they labored for temporally.

5. In a still wider range, Jesus' work for men is one not of destroying but of fulfilling. He fulfils nature; he gives it new meaning; he makes it teach and illustrate spiritual truths; he makes "every common bush afire with God." He fulfils life, to every one who trusts in him, making it rich, noble, eternal, worth living. He fulfils the longings, hopes, and aspirations of men. To become a Christian is to become the most complete man in every direction.

18. **For verily**, the familiar *Amen* of church worship. Used to introduce an emphatic truth. **Till heaven and earth pass**, as long as there is any place or use for law. **One jot or one tittle.** "Jot is the English contracted form of the Greek *iota* (ι), the name of the smallest letter in that language, as its counterpart *yod* (י) *y* is in Hebrew. Tittle, a point, is a little crooked (horned) mark (᾽) in Greek, written over certain letters to mark the presence or absence of the *h* sound."[1] "In *Hebrew* the tittle was one of the smaller strokes, or twists of certain letters, such, *e. g.*, as distinguished ד (D) from ר (R), or כ (K) from ב (B)."[2] **Till all**, every smallest point, **be fulfilled**, accomplished, have done their work; a different word from *fulfilled* in ver. 17. Then it will be only the outward forms that vanish. Faith, hope, and love never pass away.

Observe "the New Testament nowhere treats any part of the law as abolished or repealed. The popular idea that it repeals the Jewish Sabbath and reënacts a new one has no warrant in Scripture. *There is no repealing clause in the New Testament;* and nothing in it to set aside the Old Testament, or any part of it, as obsolete, common, old-fashioned, and useless. Paul may seem to treat a part of the law as repealed, in such passages as Eph. 2:15 and Col. 2:14; but he carefully and indignantly repudiates this inference in Rom. 3:31, and impliedly so in 1 Tim. 1:8."[3] We are not to abolish fast days or Sabbaths, or Thanksgiving days because they are misused, but to fill them full of the right spirit.

19. **Therefore**, because the law, to the smallest point, is eternal. **Shall break**, release from obligation to obey. "Laws, as having binding force, are likened to bonds, hence this word, 'to loose from bonds,' means 'to annul, to deprive of authority.'"[4] He cannot abrogate or destroy, but he can regard them as without obligation. **One of these least commandments**, those which may seem to him trivial and of little importance. **And shall teach men so.** By precept or example. Teaching shows a greater perversity and self-conceit, and does a greater harm both to the teacher and the taught. **Shall be called the least in the kingdom of heaven**, the new kingdom Jesus was inaugurating, and only secondarily, its complete fruition in heaven. "The language of the penalty echoes that of the crime. He breaks the *least* command; he will be called *least* in the kingdom."[5] They are not shut out from the kingdom, because they love God and his law is in their hearts, but are least because with their good they do much harm, and injure the truth and the people. The sum total of their lives is small. True disciples will be saved, even though much of their lifework and influence be destroyed, because they have built on the true foundation, but they have built with wood, hay, stubble, instead of gold and precious stones (1 Cor. 3:12–15). This does not mean a strict adherence

[1] Prof. Isaac H. Hall.

[2] Ellicott. At one time, it is said, that the mistake of a hyphen for a comma in the tariff law of this country, changing *fruit-plants* into *fruits, plants*, cost the government two million dollars.

[3] Lyman Abbott.

[4] Thayer's *N. T. Lexicon.*

[5] Prof. Kendrick.

20 For I say unto you, That that except your righteousness shall exceed *y the righteousness* of the scribes and Phăr'ĭ-sees, ye *z* shall in no case wise enter into the kingdom of heaven.

21 ¶ *a* Ye have heard that it was said by to them of old time,*b* Thou shalt not kill; and whosoever shall kill shall be in danger of the *c* judgment: judgement:

22 But but I say unto you, That that *d* whosoever every one who is angry with his brother without a cause shall be in danger of the *c* judgment: judgement; and whosoever shall say to his brother, Raca, shall be in danger of the *e* council; but and whosoever shall say, *f* Thou fool, shall be in danger of *g* the hell of fire.

y Cp. Rom. 10. 3 & Phil. 3. 9. *z* John 3. 5. *a* ver. 33. Cp. ver. 27, 31, 38, 43. *b* Cited from Ex. 20. 13 & Deut. 5. 17. Cp. ch. 19. 18 & Mark 10. 19 & Luke 18. 20 & Rom. 13. 9 & James 2. 11. *c* Cp. Deut. 16. 18. *d* 1 John 3. 15. *e* ch. 10. 17 & 26. 59, *al.* *f* Num. 20. 10 (for mg.), *al.* *g* ch. 18. 9. Mark 9. 43. James 3. 6. Cp. ver. 29.

to ceremonial, but to the spirit, the soul of the law as interpreted by Christ. The apostles, who allowed the Gentiles to live without keeping the Jewish ceremonial law, did not come under this condemnation, for those laws had been fulfilled, and they retained the spirit of the law. **But whosoever shall do and teach them . . . shall be called great.** These are the two greatest things one can do: to keep all God's commandments in their spirit, and to persuade others to keep them.

20. **For**, giving the reason for doing and teaching correctly. The example before you is not correct. **Shall exceed the righteousness of the scribes**, the recognized teachers and interpreters of the law. **And Pharisees**, who prided themselves on their strict observance of the law, even to tithing "mint, anise, and cummin." **Ye shall in no case enter into the kingdom of heaven** on earth or in the future life. For the conditions of entering are the same for both. Why? Because their righteousness was of the form, and not of the spirit; appearance, not reality. It had none of the characteristics of the Beatitudes, none of the spirit which makes heaven to be heaven. They were punctilious as to forms and ceremonies, but left out love, justice, honesty, humility, faith.

THIS TEACHING ILLUSTRATED AND APPLIED IN FIVE CASES.

First. As to the Sixth Commandment.

21. **Ye have heard** in the synagogues and from the teaching of the scribes. **Said by**, or to. The Greek is indefinite, but most modern scholars translate it "to." **Them of old time.**[1] It was a part of the early law of their nation, with an old traditional interpretation. **Thou shalt not kill.** Exodus 20: 13. The sixth of ten commandments given from Mt. Sinai, and hence a divine law. **Whosoever shall kill**, etc. This was an addition of the Scribes or Rabbis. Its effect was to limit the meaning of the law to actual murder, the outward act; for only such outward act could come for trial before the tribunal.

The judgment before the tribunal, or Council of Seven, which was the local court established by the Sanhedrim in every town of Palestine (Deut. 16 : 18) for the trial and punishment of capital crimes.[2]

22. **But I.** The "I" is emphatic in the Greek. **Whosoever is angry with his brother**, has the passionate feelings, the spirit of hate, which prompts him to injure or kill his brother, *i. e.*, any one with whom he comes into relation. **Without a cause**, *i. e.*, unreasoning, uncontrolled passion. This phrase is not in the best manuscripts. **Shall be in danger of the judgment.** That is, the tribunal mentioned above for the trial of murderers. It is equivalent to saying that he is a murderer (1 John 3: 15). He has the spirit which leads to murder, which is the real soul of murder. The injury to others lies in the outward act. The guilt of the doer lies in the feelings which prompt the act, whether they are expressed in the act or not. The soul filled with anger is like a reservoir of this evil spirit, ready to be drawn out on any occasion. The evil is in the soul, whether the occasion comes or not. A bad tree deserves to be cut down whether it actually bears fruit or not. **Shall say to his brother, Raca.** Empty, worthless fellow, blockhead, a common term of reproach at the time. Shall be so angry as to call his brother hard names, and thus to injure him if he dared to or had the power. **Shall be in danger of the council.** Liable to be tried by the Sanhedrim, the highest court of the Jews. That is, he has a still higher degree of guilt in accordance with the intenser degree of his anger.[3] **But whosoever shall say, Thou fool.** This term

[1] See Whately's *Annotations* on the Story of Shield found by an Antiquary.

[2] See Josephus, *Antiquities*, 4, 8, 15.

[3] See a different interpretation by Prof. John P. Peters, in the *Journal of Biblical Literature*, 1892.

23 *h* [Therefore if / If therefore] thou [art / bring] thy gift [to / at] the altar, and there rememberest that thy brother hath [ought / aught] against thee;

24 [Leave / Leave] there thy gift before the altar, and go thy way; first be reconciled to thy brother, and then come and offer thy gift.

25 *i* Agree with thine adversary quickly, whiles thou art [with him / with him] in the way; lest [at any time / haply] the adversary deliver thee to the judge, and the judge deliver thee to the officer, and thou be cast into prison.

h Cp. ch. 6. 15 & Mark 11. 25. *i* ch. 8. 4 & 23. 18. *j* Luke 12. 58, 59.

expresses more than want of wisdom; it means stupid fool, vile apostate, impious wretch. It expresses a stronger degree of reproach and contempt than Raca, and hence an intenser passion and hate which led to its utterance. **Shall be in danger of hell fire,** "the Gehenna of fire." Gehenna is Greek for "land or valley of Hinnom," the narrow glen south of Jerusalem, where the "refuse of the city, the bodies of criminals, the carcases of animals, and all sorts of filth were cast." The fires were continually burning, and the smoke ascended without ceasing. It thus became the natural metaphor and symbol of the punishment of the wicked, the moral refuse of mankind.

Note that Gehenna, the symbol of punishment, "should be carefully distinguished from Hades, which is never used for the place of punishment, but for the place of departed spirits without reference to their moral condition. This distinction, ignored in the Authorized Version, is made in the Revision." [1]

NOTE. (1) "The most important thing to keep in mind is that there is no distinction of *kind* between these punishments, only of *degree*. In the thing compared, the *Judgment* inflicted death by the sword, the *Council*, death by stoning, and the disgrace of the *Gehenna of fire* followed as an intensification of the horrors of death; but the punishment is one and the same, — *death*." [2]

(2) Hate, passionate anger, is deadly to the soul in which it dwells. If not banished, cast out, it leads to certain spiritual death. He that has it is in danger of the Gehenna of fire. "Whoso hateth his brother is a murderer, and ye know that no murderer hath eternal life abiding in him" (1 John 3 : 15).[3]

(3) Distinguish between anger that is unreasoning, hating passion, and the indignation against wrong which every good man must feel, which God feels. God's wrath, often mentioned, is not passion, not hate, but indignation, and I always translate the word thus in my mind. Compare John 2 : 15; Eph. 4 : 26; James 1 : 19. So our Lord called the Pharisees "fools," etc. But these expressions were not ebullitions of anger, and did not express hate. They were the warnings of love.

23. **Therefore.** That is, seeing the danger and guilt of all anger or wrong feeling, and lest you incur the penalty. **If thou bring thy gift** (thy sacrifice) **to the altar.** In the Temple. To bring a sacrifice to the altar was the Jewish method of public worship. The modern equivalent would be, "If thou goest to church." [4] . . . **Hath ought against thee.** That is the right time for recollection and self-scrutiny. The worshipper is to ask himself, not whether he has a ground of complaint against any one, but whether any one has cause of complaint against him, which might arouse anger in his brother, and also in himself.

24. **Leave there thy gift before the altar.** "The whole language implies the urgency of the case. It is better to let even the worship of God be interrupted than that brotherly love should not continue; and indeed there is no true worship where the heart fails in brotherly love. Compare with this teaching John 14 : 21, 23; 15 : 12, 17; and 1 John 4 : 7, 8, 20. It gives a hint why prayer is often unavailing and worship unsatisfying." [4] **First be reconciled to thy brother.** Remove the offence, have the right feelings, make friendly overtures. **Then come and offer thy gift,** when you have the right spirit, and show it. Then you are in a frame of mind in which you can truly worship God.[5]

25. **Agree with,** come to an agreement, settle your difficulty. **Thine adversary.** The one who has a grievance against you, that he is carrying to the law courts. Do not let anger, which has been shown to be so dangerous, prevent or delay you. **In the way with him,** on the road to the judge, after reaching whom the action must go on. **The judge,** having decided against you. **The officer,** our police officer or sheriff.

[1] Prof. M. R. Vincent. [2] Alford.
[3] "Anger is a brief madness." "Angry men turn bees and leave their lives in the wound."
[4] Abbott.
[5] For an illustration of reconciliation to man, before we can worship God, see Coleridge's *Ancient Mariner*, Part IV., and the two verses preceding the last two in Part VII.

26 Verily I say unto thee, [k] Thou shalt by no means come out thence, till thou hast / have paid the uttermost / last farthing.

27 ¶ [l] Ye have heard that it was said, by them of old time, [m] Thou shalt not commit adultery:

28 But / but I say unto you, [n] That whosoever / that every one that looketh on a woman to lust after her hath committed adultery with her already in his heart.

29 [o] And if thy right eye [p] offend thee, / causeth thee to stumble, pluck it out, and cast / it from thee: for it is profitable for thee that one of thy members should perish, and not *that* thy whole body should be cast into [q] hell.

k Cp. ch. 18. 34, 35. *l* See ver. 21. *m* Cited from Ex. 20. 14 & Deut. 5. 18. *n* Job 31. 1. Prov. 6. 25. Ecclus. 9. 8. Cp. 2 Sam. 11. 2. *o* ch. 18. 8, 9. Mark 9. 43–48. *p* ch. 15. 12 (mg.) & 17. 27, *al.* Cp. ch. 13. 41 & Luke 17. 1. *q* ch. 10. 28 & 23. 15, 33. Luke 12. 5. Cp. ver. 22.

26. **Till thou hast paid the uttermost farthing.** Farthing, in English, means "fourth thing," and is one fourth of a penny. Pennies were once made with a cross upon them, so that they could be broken into four parts. Farthing here is the *quadrans*, the fourth part of a Roman *as*, and was a very small brass coin, worth about one quarter of a cent, the two mites of Mark 12 : 42.

Verses 25, 26 are still a warning against the folly, and sin, and danger of anger, the spirit of murder. Unsettled quarrels lead to murder and crime, and to their natural punishment in this life and the life to come. Of course they may also be taken as a parable of the necessity of immediate reconciliation with God.

SECOND. AN EXAMPLE FROM THE SEVENTH COMMANDMENT, vers. 27–32.

Note the order of the argument; (1) the command; (2) the true interpretation of it; (3) an earnest appeal that it be obeyed at any cost; (4) a correction of the Pharisee's false application of it.

27. **Thou shalt not commit adultery**, a sin that destroys the family, which is an institution dear to God, and necessary to the building up of his kingdom, and to the welfare of God's children. This commandment is the wall around the family, the city of true love, with its homes, its children, its heavenly life of love, — the type of the city of God. This wall defends the home against the demons of selfishness, the dragons of sensual love and divorce, the storms of vile literature, the armies of evil thoughts and bad companions. This commandment is also a wall to keep men from entering another city, the city of *False Pleasure*, a city of destruction like that from which Bunyan's pilgrim fled. In its centre is a burning whirlwind of flame, filled with diseases, remorse, and death. This vortex of fiery evils is hidden from the sight of those without by being surrounded with palaces of sensual delight, magnificent temples of lust, brilliant saloons of intoxicating drinks, conversation halls of lewd stories, libraries of obscene literature, whose walls are hung with obscene pictures.

28. **But I say unto you.** Here, as in the case of murder, Jesus shows that the real evil is in the heart and the character which leads to the outward crime. Cleanse the fountain and the stream will be pure. **Whosoever looketh on a woman to lust after her**, not forbidding, as some have said, the love that leads to marriage, but the lust after the forbidden that leads to adultery and unchasteness of life. It is "the indulgence of an evil imagination." **Hath committed adultery with her already in his heart.** He has committed the real essence of the crime. He that would commit a sin if all restraints were removed, but is prevented by them from the act of sin, does not harm others so much, but he has the criminal character, and sins against his own soul.[1]

This does not refer to the desire, if it is checked and conquered. "You can't prevent the devil from shooting arrows of evil thoughts into your heart; but take care that you do not let such arrows stick fast and grow there. Do as a good old man of past times has said: 'I can't prevent a bird from flying over my head, but I can prevent him from making a nest in my hair.'" [2]

This command does not forbid the attraction which draws persons together toward marriage, and true family life. As the act of eating may become a sacrament, spiritually and intellectually elevating, "a feast of reason and a flow of soul," so while lust and unbridled imaginations are degrading and sensual, yet marriage, true love between husband and wife, may be a sacrament, spiritually uplifting, a means of grace, steps toward heaven.

29. **And if thy right eye**, the best and most precious. Of course this is a figurative expres-

[1] See Plato's *Republic* on the just man, with his illustration from Gyges' ring.

[2] Luther.

30 And if thy right hand [offend thee, causeth thee to stumble], cut it off, and cast [if it is] from thee: for it is profitable for thee that one of thy members should perish, and not [that] thy whole body [should be cast go] into hell.

31 It [hath been was] said also, [r] Whosoever shall put away his wife, let him give her a writing of divorcement:

32 [s] [But but] I say unto you, [That whosoever shall put that every one that putteth] away his wife, saving for the cause of fornication, [causeth her to commit adultery: maketh her an adulteress:] and [t] whosoever shall marry her [that is divorced when she is put away] committeth adultery.

33 ¶ Again, ye have heard that it [hath been was] said [by to] them of old time, [u] Thou shalt not forswear thyself, but [v] shalt perform unto the Lord thine oaths:

r ch. 19. 7. Jer. 3. 1. Cited from Deut. 24. 1. *s* ch. 19. 9. Mark 10. 11, 12. Luke 16. 18. Cp. 1 Cor. 7. 10, 11. *t* Rom. 7. 3. *u* Lev. 19. 12. 1 Tim. 1. 10. *v* Num. 30. 2. Deut. 23. 21. Eccles. 5. 4. Ecclus. 18. 22.

sion. The literal plucking out of an eye would not change the character or remove the difficulty. **Offend thee**, cause thee to stumble into sin. The kindred noun is *skandalon* (from which our words *scandal* and *slander* are both derived), the stick in a trap on which the bait is placed, and which springs up and shuts the trap at the touch of an animal. Hence generally, *a snare, a stumblingblock*. Christ's meaning here is: If your eye or your hand serve as an obstacle or trap to ensnare or make you fall in your moral walk, **pluck it out, and cast it from thee**, lose anything, rather than sin.

The connection of this verse with the previous ones lies in the intensity of lustful desires, which often sweep away all barriers, all laws, all hopes. They are compared to the right eye, the right hand and foot. But they must be conquered at any cost. The comparison is a general one, applying to all appetites and desires. Compare the appetite of the drunkard, the passion of the gambler, who find it easier to give up character, property, family, friends, health, heaven itself, rather than resist their appetites.

Note that the hand and eye, like the appetites they represent, are not only innocent, but very important in themselves. But if you cannot escape from their misuse except by giving them up, then cut them off, as you would a diseased limb to save the life of the body.

It is profitable for thee. The wise man always looks forward to the consequences of his actions. **Body**, standing for the whole life here, because the sin referred to is a sin against the body. **Hell**, "Gehenna, not Hades; the place of punishment, not the place of the dead; hence, spiritual, not physical death is referred to." [1]

30. **And if thy right hand.** The argument is the same as in verse 29, repeated for the sake of emphasis. The Teacher now returns to the commandment under discussion.

31. **It hath been said.** See Deut. 24 : 1, 2. A temporary civil enactment, misinterpreted by the Rabbis. **Shall put away his wife.** The School of Hillel, widely prevalent in Christ's time, allowed a husband to put away his wife for the most trivial causes, such as bad cooking, or even for not being as handsome as some other woman he liked. The only condition was, **Let him give her a writing of divorcement.** This was a restraint on hasty action, and a protection to the wife's character.

32. **Whosoever shall put away his wife, saving for the cause of fornication**, the one "ground of separation by which *the nature of marriage and its obligations is, as a matter of fact*, directly and immediately destroyed." [2] **Causeth her to commit adultery**, for she is, by the divine ordinance, still the wife of him who put her away. Divorce, except for the above cause, leads to all the sins and evils and dangers against which the seventh commandment is a guard.[3]

THIRD. AN ILLUSTRATIVE EXAMPLE FROM THE THIRD COMMANDMENT, vers. 33–37.

33. **Thou shalt not forswear thyself**, etc. Practically one application of the third commandment (Exodus 20 : 7), expressed in other words in Lev. 19 : 12; Num. 30 : 2; Deut. 23 : 21. This commandment was limited by the Scribes to *false* swearing. They interpreted it to apply only to oaths which contained the name of God; other oaths were not binding. They were exceedingly particular about using the sacred name of Jehovah, refusing to pronounce it even in the sacred books. Compare Matthew 23 : 16–22. The Jews of Christ's time, like the Orientals of to-day, "are fearfully profane. Everybody curses and swears when in a passion. No people that I have ever known

[1] Schaff. [2] Meyer.

[3] For a full discussion of this question, of the reasons for divorce laws, and separate maintenance as distinguished from divorce, see Pres. Woolsey's *Divorce and Divorce Legislation*, Martensen's *Christian Ethics*, vol. ii., pp. 29–46.

34 But I say unto you, [w] Swear not at all; neither by the heaven; for [x] it is God's throne:
35 Nor by the earth; for it is his footstool: neither by Jĕ-ru'să-lĕm; for it is [y] the city of the great King.
36 Neither shalt thou swear by thy head, because thou canst not make one hair white or black.
37 But let your communication be, Yea, yea; Nay, nay: for [z] whatsoever is more than these cometh of [a] evil.
38 ¶ Ye have heard that it hath been said, [b] An eye for an eye, and a tooth for a tooth:
39 But I say unto you, [c] That ye resist not him that is evil: but [d] whosoever [e] shall smite thee on thy right cheek, turn to him the other also.

w James 5. 12. *x* ch. 23. 22. Isai. 66. 1. Acts 7. 49. See Rev. 4. 2. *y* Ps. 48. 2. *z* Cp. Prov. 10. 19. *a* See ch. 13. 19. *b* Cited from Ex. 21. 24 & Lev. 24. 20 & Deut. 19. 21. *c* 1 Cor. 6. 7. 1 Pet. 2. 23. *d* For ver. 39–42, see Luke 6. 29, 30. Cp. Rom. 12. 17. *e* ch. 26. 67. Isai. 50. 6. Lam. 3. 30.

can compare with these Orientals for profaneness in the use of the names and attributes of God. The evil habit seems inveterate and universal." "The people now use the very same sort of oaths that are mentioned and condemned by our Lord. They swear by the head, by their life, by heaven, and by the Temple, or, what is in its place, the church. The forms of cursing and swearing, however, are almost infinite, and fall on the pained ear all day long." [1]

34–36. **Swear not at all.** Why? Because swearing by created things, as heaven, earth, Jerusalem, parts of your body, is really swearing by him who created them. Do not try to confirm your statements by oaths.

37. **Let your communication be, Yea, yea.** So live, so keep your word, show such a character, that your simple statement, especially if repeated, will be more readily believed, than that of a swearer when confirmed by an oath. **Whatsoever is more than these cometh of evil.** Has its source in the evil in the heart and in the world. It increases both lying and profanity. "The more swearing, the more lying," said Coleridge. The Authorized is better than the Revision here.

NOTE. (1) This does not forbid what are called "judicial oaths," that is, a solemn affirmation, as in the presence of God. This is not "swearing," and does not take the name of God in vain. The breaking of such affirmation is punishable by law as perjury.

(2) But the taking these oaths so carelessly and irreverently, as is sometimes done, is profane.

(3) The root of profanity is irreverence, whether it be taking God's name in vain, or swearing falsely. It is the very opposite of worship, reverence, and love to God. It takes away the moral restraint and the elevating power of the conscious presence of God. Men excuse themselves because they do it thoughtlessly. But that is their very condemnation. It is taking God's name *in vain*. Men always lose faith in that which they take lightly on their tongues. This is the deadly nature of profanity. Because to take God's name in vain is to raise up an army of doubts. There is no way in which you can make God seem a myth, an unreality, and destroy his power over men more easily than by taking his name lightly on the lips.

(4) This law forbids (a) perjury; (b) all careless and trifling use of God's name; (c) all profane swearing by anything God has made. (d) It forbids all irreverent use of the Bible, hymns, sacred things; all joking and punning upon them, or connecting funny stories with them. (e) It forbids all irreverence, thoughtless laughing and talking in the house of God. (f) It forbids all empty forms of religion, without its spirit.

FOURTH. AN EXAMPLE FROM THE TREATMENT OF THOSE WHO INJURE US, vers. 38–42.

38. **An eye for an eye.** A rule for punishment of offences coming before the civil court, and founded in justice, much more so than any modern system of fines, which favor the rich. The Pharisaic perversion of this rule was the application of it to private wrongs, and the dealings of man with man, while it really applied to magistrates, to government. Most of the difficulty in this command comes through confounding civic with private duties.

39. **But I say, . . . Resist not evil,** or "him that is evil." The Greek can be read either way. Resist not evil by evil, or by force, but as Christ did, by love and goodness. This is explained by the four instances which follow, and they show that the command applies to private injuries and

[1] Dr. Thomson in *Land and Book*.

40 And if any man will sue thee at the law, would go to law with thee, and take away thy coat, let him have *thy* thy cloke also.

41 And whosoever shall *f* compel thee to go a one mile, go with him twain.

42 *g* Give to him that asketh thee, and *h* from him that would borrow of thee turn not thou away.

f ch. 27. 32. Mark 15. 21 (& mg. for mg.). *g* Ps. 37. 21. Prov. 21. 26. *h* Deut. 15. 8. Ps. 37. 26 & 112. 5. Luke 6. 34, 35.

forbids revenge or retaliation. It does not apply to courts of law; it does not overthrow all government penalties and punishments, or defence of the community against violence. But even these must never be performed in revenge or retaliation, but only in love. The spirit with which the Christian is to meet evil men and the evil deeds they do to him is one of love and peace; seeking the good of the injurer. Your business is to overcome evil with good, to feed your hungry enemy, and give him drink if he thirsts (Rom. 12: 18–21).[1] **Smite thee on the right cheek, turn to him the other also**, not literally, for that would be like the Rabbis' interpretation, but act in that spirit; exactly as Christ did to the man in the trial who struck him with a rod. He did not turn the other cheek, but expostulated in a dignified manner, and did not resist by force, or ask for revenge. To obey this command literally would demand little effort, seldom required; but never to feel personal resentment against those who recklessly misrepresent us, who slander us, who insult us — this is a much more difficult matter, and is what Christ requires of us.[2]

40. **If any man will**, wills to, proposes to, **sue thee at the law**, has some quarrel with you or thinks you have wronged him, and wants to go to law about it, and would **take away thy coat**, the undergarment or tunic, implying violence, for he would first have to take away the **cloke** or large and more costly outer garment. Then yield more than he asks, rather than quarrel with him.

41. **Compel thee to go.** The Greek word (ἀγγαρεύσει) "throws the whole injunction into a picture which is entirely lost to the English reader. A man is travelling, and about to pass a post-station, where horses and messengers are kept in order to forward royal missives as quickly as possible. An official rushes out, seizes him, and forces him to go back and carry a letter to the next station, perhaps to the great detriment of his business. The word is of Persian origin, and denotes the *impressment* into service, which officials were empowered to make of any available persons or beasts on the great lines of road where the royal mails were carried by relays of riders."[3] **A mile**, Greek μίλιον, that is, a thousand paces. **Go with him twain**, two. Do more than is required. Make a free, joyous service of that which was meant for a slavish one, and thus outwit and overcome evil by doing more and better with a higher motive than a lower one would lead you to do. This would commend to the heathen the Christian spirit, while resisting would be not only vain, but kindle passion and cruelty in the oppressor's heart.

42. **Give to him that asketh thee**, not literally, but in spirit. "Seize the spirit in the letter; the seed in the shell."[4] Always have the spirit that loves to give and to help as many as possible. Give always to him that asks, not always what he asks, but what is wisest and best; as God answers our prayers. "Love is not to be divorced from wisdom and experience." "These precepts are not meant for fools."[5] Alford well remarks: "To give everything to every one — the sword to the madman, the alms to the impostor, the criminal request to the temptress — would be to act as the enemy of others and ourselves." Indiscriminate giving is often a great evil to the individual and the community. But the spirit that loves to give, that gives as much as possible in the wisest way, is Christlike and divine. A stingy Christian is a contradiction in terms. **And from him that would borrow.** (See Deut. 15: 7–11.) Here the same principle applies. Delight to help by lending.

NOTE. "A modern philosopher, Mr. J. S. Mill, has said that Christ, in giving such instructions, had done wonders for the ideal of humility and charity in the world, but had failed to inculcate manliness and that courage which was so amply developed by the laws of mediæval chivalry. Mill thought, therefore, that the Christian ideal was one-sided, and required to be supplemented by the warlike type, which resents insult, and challenges the aggressor to defend himself.

[1] There are some capital illustrations in Arvine's *Religious Anecdotes*, No. 159, "William Ladd and his Neighbor;" and 160, "A Christian Colony," by Mrs. Lydia Maria Child. See Ruskin's *Modern Painters*, Vol. V., the chapter on "Peace." Whately's *Annotations*, p. 315.

[2] See R. W. Dale, *Laws of Christ for Common Life*, pp. 57–75.

[3] Prof. M. R. Vincent in *Word Studies*.

[4] Boardman, *The Kingdom*.

[5] Spurgeon.

43 ¶ *i* Ye have heard that it [hath been said] was said, *j* Thou shalt love thy neighbour, and *k* hate thine enemy:

44 But I say unto you, *l* Love your enemies, *m* bless and pray for them that curse persecute you; do good to them that hate you, and pray for them which despitefully use you, and persecute you;

45 *n* That ye may be [the children] sons of your Father which is in heaven: for he maketh his sun to rise on the evil and on the good, and *o* sendeth rain on the just and on the unjust.

i See ver. 21. *j* Cited from Lev. 19. 18. See ch. 19. 19. *k* Cp. Deut. 23. 6. *l* Luke 6. 27, 28. Rom. 12. 20. Cp. Ex. 23. 4 & Job 31. 29, 30 & Ps. 7. 4. *m* Luke 23. 34. Acts 7. 60. 2 Tim. 4. 16. 1 Pet. 3. 9. *n* Luke 6. 35. Cp. Eph. 5. 1 & Phil. 2. 15. *o* Acts 14. 17.

Bravery is of all qualities that which most attracts the human race. But the one feature which stands out prominently in the society founded by Christ and his apostles is the extraordinary heroism which was shown in the face of death and tortures, not only by men, but by feeble women and tender children. It amazed the heathen magistrates, who were striving after fortitude by the aid of philosophy. It amazed the wild savages, who mistook gentleness for cowardice, when they found that it was harder to terrify the missionary who came with the gospel than the invader who came in battle array. Quiet endurance may be more heroic than violent resistance, and the Christian law of bearing personal insults and injuries meekly tends to the development of the highest courage and of the truest manliness. There is nothing more courageous, more heroic in all history than the living up to the laws of Christ we have just been studying."[1]

FIFTH. ILLUSTRATED BY THE DOCTRINE OF LOVE, vers. 43–48.

43. **Thou shalt love thy neighbour.** A precept found in Lev. 19 : 18, with the addition, "as thyself." This was good teaching.

Neighbor, *i. e.*, nigh-bor, one who is outwardly near, every one who can be reached by personal influence. So the parable of the Good Samaritan (Luke 10 : 30–37).

The Jewish teachers misinterpreted this in two ways: (1) by limiting it to those of their own race and religion; and (2) by the addition **and hate thine enemy**, which is not in the Old Testament. On the contrary, they were told (Ex. 23 : 4), "If thou meet thine enemy's ox or ass going astray, thou shalt surely bring it back to him again," and (Prov. 25 : 21), "If thine enemy be hungry, give him bread to eat." They probably inferred the addition from the instances in which they were taught to utterly destroy their enemies (Deut. 7 : 2 ; 23 : 6 ; Ps. 137 : 8, 9), where the destruction of their enemies was ordered, not from hate, but because it was necessary for the preservation of the kingdom of righteousness on earth. The Jews were separated from other nations, not to hate them but to help them, as Christians are to be separate from the world for the sake of helping and saving the world.

44. **Love your enemies.** The word here used for "love" (ἀγαπάω) is equivalent to the Latin *diligo*, emphasizing choice, friendship, well-wishing, rather than delight in their character. It is the word that is used of God's love to sinners. According to President Hopkins, in *Law of Love and Love as Law*, there are three elements in love. (1) Desire for, awakened by a perception of worth as distinguished from worthiness. (2) Attraction toward, delight in, the object of love. (3) A rational choice to do him good and seek his welfare, so strong that we are willing to make sacrifices for him. We cannot always delight in the character of our enemy, but we can choose to do him good, and delight to do it.

Note the entirety of the love and its various modes of expression. (1) The feeling (2) expressed in words, (3) in acts, (4) in prayer. ("Bless" and the second "pray" are omitted in the R. V. But they are true, and recorded in Luke.)

Bless. Invoke blessings upon, and speak well of, in return for curses. Conquer bad words and feelings by good words. EXAMPLES. David's treatment of Saul (1 Sam. 24 : 4–7) ; Joseph and his brethren (Gen. 45 : 5–15) ; Moses (Num. 12 : 1, 13) ; Stephen (Acts 7 : 60) ; Paul (2 Tim. 4 : 16). **Do good.** So in Prov. 25 : 21, 22 ; Rom. 12 : 20. The only possible way of overcoming evil is by good. To hate our enemies is to have two bad people instead of one, with no power to help that one to become good. **And pray for them.** Seek the highest influences for their good. **Which despitefully use you.** A forcible word, meaning "to vex out of spite, with the sole object of inflicting harm."[2] The best commentary on these matchless counsels is the bright example of him who gave them. (See Luke 23 : 34 ; 1 Pet. 2 : 21–24 ; and cf. Rom. 12 : 20, 21 ; 1 Cor. 4 : 12 ; 1 Pet. 3 : 9.)[3]

FIRST REASON. 45. **That ye may be the**

[1] Condensed from an article in the *Sunday-School Times*, by Prof. J. P. Mahaffy. [2] Cambridge Bible. [3] See Plato's *Crito ;* Lowell's *Poems*, "The Vision of Sir Launfal."

46 *p* For if ye love them (which) love you, what reward have ye? do not even the publicans the same?

47 And if ye salute your brethren only, what do ye more *than others*? do not even the (publicans so?) *q* Gentiles the same?

48 *r* (Be ye) Ye therefore shall be *s* perfect, even *t* as your heavenly Father which is in heaven is perfect.

p Luke 6. 32. *q* ch. 6. 7, 32. *r* Cp. Luke 6. 36. *s* ch. 19. 21. 1 Cor. 2. 6. Phil. 3. 15. Col. 1. 28 & 4. 12. James 1. 4 & 3. 2. See Gen. 17. 1. *t* Cp. Lev. 19. 2 & 1 Pet. 1. 15.

children of your Father which is in heaven. Not only by creation, in his image, but spiritually, born into his likeness, with his character, heirs of his home, partakers of his joy. **Sun to rise on the evil and on the good,** etc. God thus expresses his love to all men, and attracts them to himself; and most of all in sending his Son to save the lost. He *imparts* to all alike, but all do not *receive* alike: men may sit in darkness in spite of the sun, or suffer hunger for idleness in spite of the rain. And there are lost souls in spite of God's love that would save all. Under the blest influences of sun and rain there may spring up thorns as well as flowers, and thistles as well as wheat.

Second Reason. This is the spirit which distinguishes disciples.

46. **If ye love them which love you, what reward have ye?** What meritorious thing have you done? What that marks you as a disciple of Jesus? **Do not even the publicans so?** the men that are notorious sinners, the meanest sinners who are despised and outcasts. If you do nothing more than these, why are you any better than they? What has your religion done for you?

47. **If ye salute your brethren only,** an act which demands no piety, no goodness, no nobility. **What do ye more than others?**[1] Disciples ought to do more than others, because they have received more; they know better their duty; they have professed more; they are able to do more; they are under deeper obligations. **Do not even the publicans,** R. V. the Gentiles, the heathen.

48. **Be ye therefore perfect,** or as R. V., "Ye therefore shall be perfect;" if you live up to the precepts of this chapter. This is a command and a promise, and a guide of the way to perfection. **Perfect.** "Complete in all the elements of moral goodness."[2] "Completion in Christian character in contrast with a half-finished and partial character, a character that is Christian in some parts and worldly and selfish in others." "In brief, one may be an imperfect, but one cannot be a partial Christian. He may obey Christ imperfectly, but he cannot obey in part and disobey in part (6: 24; compare Eph. 4: 13; Col. 1: 28; 4: 12)." "A complete obedience embraces the whole man, and brings the spirit as well as the members under allegiance to these laws."[3] Perfection is simply the sum of the commandments. "The goal is not brought to the racers, but the racers must strive to reach the goal."[4] The *Perfect* (τέλειοι) "are those who have reached the goal, have attained maturity." In Eph. 4: 13, 14, "perfect" describes *full-grown* men in contrast with babes. "It is the goal of human excellence," complete development of being.

Even as your Father which is in heaven is perfect. With every element of goodness which shines in him, with all the fulness of which our natures are capable, without flaw or imperfection in spirit or in action. The lamp, though infinitely smaller than the sun, shines with perfect light. Every color, every power of the sunbeam may shine in the candle ray. The image on the retina of the eye may be a perfect picture in every detail of a landscape that extends over many miles.

No Christian wants to be less than this. It is his purpose, his prayer, his hope, his goal, and some time

> "God shall make divinely real
> The highest forms of thy Ideal."[5]

"God never permitted us to form a theory too beautiful for his power to make practical."

> "Sweet Cynosure far fixed in spotless fields
> High in the regions of the night,
> Thou servest a waymark to the sons of time."

[1] Wm. Secker's *The Nonesuch Professor* develops this idea finely.

[2] Morison. [3] Abbott. [4] Conder. [5] Mrs. Preston.

CHAPTER 6.

SECTION VII. — THE PRINCIPLES OF THE KINGDOM (*continued*).

5. APPLICATIONS TO THE RELIGIOUS LIFE, 6: 1–18.
   - A Lesson on Almsgiving.
   - A Lesson on Prayer.
   - A Lesson on Forgiveness.
   - A Lesson on Fasting.

6. APPLICATIONS TO THE AIM AND PURPOSE OF LIFE, 6: 19–34.
   - The supreme choice (1) of Treasure, (2) of a Master.
   - Helps toward a right choice.

Time.

Midsummer of A. D. 28.

Place.

A mountain near the Sea of Galilee.

1 TAKE heed that ye [u] do not your alms/righteousness before men, [v] to be seen of them: otherwise/else ye have no reward of/with your Father which is in heaven.
2 [w] Therefore/When therefore thou doest *thine* alms, do not sound/not a trumpet before thee, as the hypocrites do in the synagogues and in the streets, that they may [x] have glory of men. Verily I say unto you, They have [y] received their reward.

u 1 John 2. 29. Cp. Tobit 12. 8, 9 & 14. 11. *v* ver. 16. ch. 23. 5. *w* Cp. 1 Cor. 13. 3. *x* John 5. 44. *y* Luke 6. 24.

V. APPLICATIONS TO THE RELIGIOUS LIFE, 6: 1–18.

A LESSON ON ALMSGIVING, vers. 1–4.

1. **Take heed.** Emphatic; because the evil to be avoided is very great; the temptation to it is very great; the danger of falling into this sin is very great on account of its insidious nature.

That ye do not your alms. R. V., according to the best MSS., "your righteousness," your good actions both moral and religious, **before men** for the purpose or design **to be seen of them.** "The Greek verb is a strong word (the root from which comes *theatre*), and suggests the being gazed at as a spectacle." "What our Lord forbids is therefore not publicity in performing good deeds, which is often necessary and therefore proper, but ostentatious publicity, *for the purpose* of attracting attention and gaining applause." [1]

"We may be seen to do good, but not do good to be seen." [2] This is not opposed to letting your light shine (Matt. 5: 16), for good done with this selfish motive prevents your light from shining. The purer the motive, the brighter the light.

Otherwise, *i. e.*, else, if you do not take heed. **Ye have no reward of your Father.** You may have a certain reward of praise and esteem from men, for whose sake you perform the action, but none from God, for you have done nothing for him, nothing of the kind he wants done, nothing to please him, or in accordance with true virtue; why then should you expect a reward from him? **Of your Father,** rather, "with" as R. V. "The preposition (παρὰ) means *with, by the side of*, so that the true sense is, *reserved for you and awaiting you by the side of your Father.*" [3]

THE PRINCIPLE, immediately applied to giving, to prayer, and to fasting, is that it is the motive which gives virtue-value to a deed. It is not the deed, but the motive, which shows the character, and cultivates the character. The same outward deed may be heavenly or devilish according to the purpose of the doer; as a doctor may give poisonous medicine, or cut off a limb to save life, and a murderer may do the same to destroy life. [4]

2. **Therefore,** on account of this principle, **when thou doest thine alms** (ἐλεημοσύνην), the virtue or quality of one who is ἐλεήμων, *merciful*, hence *mercy shown in giving to the needy.* Our word *alms* (singular, not plural), contracted from *almesse*, is an abridged form of the Greek word, and *eleemosynary* is a transliteration.

Do not sound a trumpet before thee, a common figurative expression derived from the custom of calling the people to see a spectacle, or calling attention to a cavalcade of noted people, by sounding a trumpet, as we ring a bell or have a brass band.

[1] Prof. Broadus.
[2] Bp. Wordsworth.
[3] Prof. M. R. Vincent, *Word Studies.*
[4] See McCosh's *Divine Government.*

3 But when thou doest alms, let not thy left hand know what thy right hand doeth:

4 That that thine alms may be in secret: [z] and thy Father which seeth in secret himself shall reward recompense thee. openly.

z ver. 6, 18.

Some think that the figure was suggested by the ten trumpet-shaped chests in the Temple, into which the people put their offerings. (Luke 21: 1-4.) "Do not make a trumpet of the box; it looks like one, but do not use it for the purpose of calling attention to what you are about to put in it."[1]

As the hypocrites do, (ὑποκριταὶ,) *actors, those who play a part upon a stage*, usually, in ancient times, in a mask. The player appears in one character, while he is really another; the beggar may be dressed like a king, and a fool act the part of a wise man. Hence the word came to mean, pretending to be one thing while really another. These men gave their alms **in the synagogues**, their places of religious assemblies, **and in the streets**, where crowds could see them. **That they may have glory of men.** They were hypocrites because they pretended to be benevolent and religious, when in reality they were caring only for themselves.

They have received **their reward.** Emphasize *their*. The reward they seek, the reward that belongs to such deeds done with such motives. In the Greek (ἀπέχουσι), "the preposition (ἀπὸ) indicates *receipt in full*. There is nothing more to receive."[2] The reward was a certain reputation for benevolence and piety, with a large discount from the tendency of men to impute bad motives. They had the comfort of self-conceit and complacency. They also had, what they did not count on, a reward in a development of a bad character, of selfishness and pride. The bitterest reward of sin is more sin.[3]

Note that this warning is for the persons themselves, not for those who watch others in their giving, and who should carefully study Christ's lesson on judging in the next chapter. No one has a right to impute to large givers ostentatious and selfish motives. If he does, he simply proclaims that if he gave it, it would be from those motives.

3. **Let not thy left hand know what thy right hand doeth.**[4] Let the deed be so natural, so unconscious, so entirely absorbed in the good done, that it is not worth while for one hand to tell the other, and it never thinks of doing so.[5] Possibly in many cases the left hand would be ashamed of what the right hand gave.

4. **That** (not *so that*, but *in order that*) **thine alms may be in secret.** Here is a principle rather than a rule. In many cases it is impossible that others should not know a part of the giver's gifts, but publicity is to be avoided if possible, and never should it be sought. "Distinguish between doing right in order to help others, as when one lights a beacon in order to guide the sailor, and doing right in order to be praised by others, as when one stands in the full blaze of a chandelier in order to display his jewelry. It is one thing to shine for the sake of illuminating others, and so helping them; it is another thing to shine for the sake of illuminating ourselves, and so be seen to advantage."[6] So it is one thing to try to please others, and another to try to be pleasing. The centre of one is our neighbor, of the other, self. **And thy Father.** "He will reward thee as thy Father; not as a master who gives his servant just what he earns and no more, but as a father, who gives abundantly more, and without stint, to his son that serves him."[7] **Which seeth in secret.** Who knows everything, even the most secret deed or hidden motive. **Himself shall reward thee,** recompense thee. A different word from that used in speaking of the reward of the hypocrites, which is wages (μισθόν), the servant's pay. God does not *pay* these givers, but *rewards* them freely from his overflowing love to do them good; and because they are, by their character, capable of receiving this reward, which the others were not capable of. The reward is not a paying back the gift, but divine approval, a nobler character, a more generous disposition, a likeness to God, a part in the making of the world happier and better, a share in the final victory of good.

> "In the strength of the endeavor,
> In the giving of the giver,
> In the loving of the lover,
> Lies the hidden recompense."

Openly, this has slight authority. But still it is true. There will be a recognition of the character formed, shining forth among men, but not traced directly to any one act.

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[1] Joseph Parker, D. D. [2] Prof. M. R. Vincent.

[3] See some powerful words in Ruskin's *Modern Painters*, vol. v., chapter on "Peace." Rogers' *Greyson Letters*, "The Fit Punishment of Hypocrisy," is very shrewd and interesting.

[4] Jacox's *Secular Annotations on Scripture Texts*, vol. i. 259, "The Open Right Hand's Secret from the Left."

[5] See Hudson's *Lectures on Shakespeare*, vol. ii. p. 103, for some capital remarks on unconscious virtue.

[6] Dr. Boardman, *The Kingdom*. [7] Matthew Henry.

5 ¶ And when thou prayest, thou shalt ye pray, ye shall not be as the hypocrites: *are:* for they love to *a* stand and pray standing in the synagogues and in the corners of the streets, that they may be seen of men. *b* Verily I say unto you, They have received their reward.

6 But thou, when thou prayest, enter into *c* thine inner chamber, thy closet, and when thou hast having shut thy door, pray to thy Father which is in secret; *d* and thy Father which seeth in secret shall reward recompense. thee openly.

7 But when ye pray, And in praying, use not vain repetitions, as the *e* heathen *do:* Gen'tiles do: for *f* they think that they shall be heard *g* for their much speaking.

8 Be not *ye* therefore like unto them: *h* for your Father knoweth what things ye have need of, before ye ask him.

a Mark 11. 25. Luke 18. 11. *b* ver. 2, 16. *c* 2 Kin. 4. 33. Isai. 26. 20. *d* ver. 4, 18. *e* ver. 32. ch. 5. 47. *f* 1 Kin. 18. 26. *g* Prov. 10. 19. Eccles. 5. 2. *h* ver. 32.

"Dante, describing the angels whom he met, in the *Paradiso*, impresses us at once with their external glory and their spiritual effulgence. Invariably he makes the former the result of the latter." The angel

> "Became a thing transcendent in my sight
> As a fine ruby smitten by the sun." [1]

A LESSON ON PRAYER, vers. 5–13.

5. **Thou shalt not be as the hypocrites are**, who do not really pray, do not desire or expect what they ask, or hold communion with God; but desire to appear very religious to men, and hence stand apart like the Pharisee in the parable, as if absorbed in devotion, **in the synagogues**, the proper places of worship, where the worshippers can see them, **and in the corners of the streets**, where they could be seen from four directions. **That they may be seen of men**, who will praise them for their piety and think them very good.[2] **They have their reward.** Wages; what they have earned; the reward they sought. They received no answers, for they did not seek anything from God. They had merely an envied reputation for piety, the brief praises of envious men, a tarnished and fading glory. They sold their birthright of prayer for a mess of pottage.

6. **But thou, when thou prayest**, your real purpose being to pray, **enter into thy closet**, or secret chamber, where others can neither see nor hear. The Greek word means a place of supplies, a treasury. This secret chamber of prayer can well become a treasury of divine blessings. **Shut thy door**, to keep out all other persons, as well as to shut out worldly thoughts. **Pray to thy Father**, who is your friend, who loves to aid his children. **Which is in secret.** The invisible spiritual God. **Which seeth in secret.** Knows every secret place, every hidden desire. **Shall reward thee openly.** Better, as in R. V., *recompense thee*, answer your prayers. Give you the things you ask for, or, if these are not good for you, give you the better things you would have asked for, had you seen as God sees. The answer will appear openly in the results. The true reward is not pay of any kind, but that which comes "as surely as the flowers spring from the soil where the seed has been sown," and chiefest of these is communion with God.

APPLICATIONS. (1) This does not forbid sincere prayer in the presence of others, for Jesus and the apostles prayed before others; but only formal prayers, made for the sake of appearing to pray. (2) We can pray in the secret places of our own hearts, even while we are walking the streets, or are busy with men. (3) But we all need places and times of retirement, when we can commune alone with God.

7. **But when ye pray**, **use not vain** (empty, without heart, formal, mechanical) **repetitions.** The repeating over and over of set forms, as if there were some virtue in the mere act of praying; as if God would do something for them, on account of **their much speaking.** As if "saying" their prayers at night were a talisman with some magic power against harm; as useless as the prayer-wheels of Thibet. But a repetition is not *vain* so long as it is the expression of a longing heart.

8. **Your heavenly Father.** No earthly father cares for a lot of heartless repetitions. Nor does our Heavenly Father. The fault above described shows a total misapprehension of God's nature. **Knoweth.** Appreciates; he feels for you, therefore you can come to him with freedom, and ask what you will. True prayer answered is the best means of becoming acquainted with our Father.

[1] See Joseph Cook's Monday Lectures, *Conscience*, "Solar Self-Culture."

[2] See Dr. Trumbull's *Studies in Oriental Social Life*, "Prayers and Praying in the East."

9 [i] After this manner therefore pray ye: [j] Our Father which art in heaven, [k] Hallowed be [l] thy name.

[i] For ver. 9–13, cp. Luke 11. 2–4. [j] ver. 1. [k] Isai. 29. 23. Cp. Ecclus. 36. 4 & Luke 1. 49 & 1 Pet. 3. 15. [l] John 17. 6.

THE LORD'S PRAYER.[1]

9. **After this manner therefore pray ye.** With no vain repetitions, but as children asking of a father the things they need. (1) The fact that Christ gave his prayer in two different forms shows that no exact form of words was required; and the fact that Luke, writing at least twenty-five years after the formation of the Church, gives one form, and Matthew another, shows that no obligatory form was in use in the churches. Christ and the apostles prayed in other words. (2) It is right, and often blessed, to use the Lord's Prayer as a form for bringing large numbers into the unity of worship, provided it is always filled with the spirit; but it must not be imposed upon the worshippers as a law, nor its mere repetition viewed as a virtue. (3) It is always a model indicating the spirit of true prayer.

THE SEVEN PETITIONS. "The first three refer to the Holiness, the Kingdom, the Will of God; the next four to the Needs, the Sins, the Temptations, the Perils of life." [2]

THE ENVELOPE FORM. Professor Moulton, in his *Literary Study of the Bible*, arranges the first part of the prayer in what he calls the envelope form, regarding "in earth as it is in heaven" as belonging to each of the previous petitions. Thus: —

Our Father which art in heaven,
Hallowed be thy name.
Thy kingdom come.
Thy will be done,
In earth as it is in heaven.

That is: —

Hallowed be thy name, in earth as it is in heaven.
Thy kingdom come, in earth as it is in heaven.
Thy will be done, in earth as it is in heaven.

Our Father which art in heaven. Therefore not any earthly parent. Wherever God is, there is heaven. The expression implies a Spirit with omnipresence, omnipotence, infinite and lovable goodness. Jesus Christ in his own person, as well as his teaching, has revealed God to us as our Father.

God is Creator, but the Creator is our Father.

God is the Ruler, but this Great King is our Father.

God is glorious, but this glorious being is our Father.

God is the Judge, but this Judge is our Father.

If from all literature, all history, all experience, all poetry, all imagination, we could gather together into one picture the noblest qualities of fatherhood and motherhood, lovingkindness and tender mercies, self-sacrifice, longsuffering and forgiving love, a care that is wise and gracious, seeing the good more gladly than the evil, — we would have some faint vision of what our heavenly Father is.

NOTE 1. *Our* implies that all men of every race and condition are brothers, because children of the same Father; implying, too, our fellowship with Christ, our elder brother. "You cannot have God for a father without taking man for a brother."

NOTE 2. The fact that God is our Father ennobles man. His soul is kindled from the divine, and partakes of the divine nature.

NOTE 3. Only so great a being could hear the prayers of each and give individual love to every one of his myriads of children. It is because God is so great that we can go each one to him for help, and friendship, and love.

NOTE 4. It becomes every parent so to live before his children as to give them a high idea of what the fatherhood of God means.

FIRST PETITION. **Hallowed.** Held in reverence, treated as holy, loved and worshipped by ourselves and by all, just as it is in heaven, where they know him best. **Be thy name.** God's name means "Himself as revealed and manifested." This *name* differentiates him from all other beings; it stands for his nature, attributes, and character, as when a man signs his name to a note, that name stands for all the man is and has; it is the sum of all the many names and titles applied to him in the Bible in order to express, as far as possible, every side of his nature.

(1) This prayer must be answered first in our own hearts. We are to be absorbed in devotion to our Father. (2) The more we know of God, the more clearly we see our Father's face, the more we see him in his Son, — the more will we reverence and love his name. (3) We need to cultivate a reverent spirit, for country, for the flag that

[1] *Expectation Corner* (8 cents) is the best extended illustration of prayer I have seen; *The Lord's Prayer*, by Farrar; by Charles Stanford, D. D; by Washington Gladden; *The Model Prayer*, by George D. Boardman, D. D.; *The Prayer that Teaches to Pray*, by Prof. Marcus Dods, D. D.; *Thy Kingdom Come*, by Rev. Henry Wilder Foote; *With Christ in the School of Prayer*, by Andrew Murray; *Lessons in the School of Prayer*, by A. T. Pierson.

[2] Farrar, *The Lord's Prayer*.

10 [m] Thy kingdom come. [n] Thy will be done, [in earth,] [o] as [it is] in heaven; [so on earth.]
11 [p] Give us this [q] day our daily bread.

m Cp. ch. 3. 2 & 4. 17. *n* ch. 26. 42. Luke 22. 42. Acts 21. 14. Cp. ch. 12. 50 & Heb. 13. 21. *o* Ps. 103. 20, 21. Dan. 4. 35. *p* Prov. 30. 8. *q* Cp. ver. 34.

represents it,[1] for the noble and good everywhere, most of all for our Father and his Word. Every one needs the uplifting power of reverence for the noblest and best.[2] (4) We should do all in our power to lead all men to hallow God's name, especially by living, as his children, in a manner worthy of him. (5) All profanity, all irreverence in church or Sunday-school, all light speaking of sacred things, hinders the answer to this prayer.

Second Petition. 10. **Thy kingdom come,** on earth as it is in heaven. That is, the reign of God through Christ in the hearts of all men. The prayer is for the redemption of the whole world, the universal prevalence of the principles of righteousness and the love of God. This petition asks for the most magnificent blessings the world can receive.

It asks (1) that Christ shall reign supreme in our own hearts, reign over body and spirit; every power, every desire, submissive to his sway, and praying for this means that we are sincerely desirous that he should reign over our hearts and lives. (2) "We pray for the extinction of all tyranny, whether in men or in multitudes; for the exposure and destruction of corruptions, outward and inward; for truth and righteousness in all departments of government, art, science; for the banishment from trade of every form of fraud and chicanery."[3] (3) It means that we be enabled to do all we can to bring this state of things to pass; that we work and give for it, do our political duties, send missionaries, or go ourselves.

The prayer thus taught us gives us faith and hope that his kingdom is coming. The sun's dawning rays on the mountain tops are the assurance that the perfect day will come. The best things in individuals and in nations increasing each decade are the proof of their final prevalence. The last chapter of the Bible, toward which the whole book tends, is a picture of "the earth as it is in heaven."

Third Petition. In the second petition we are thinking of the Father in heaven, that he may rule and be king over all. In this petition the point of view is his people as subjects obeying the king. **Thy will be done in (on) earth, as it is in heaven.** As the perfect angels obey it, universally, perfectly, cheerfully, from choice, with delight, as in perfect accordance with their nature. (1) This prayer is first that we ourselves may do God's will thus perfectly. There are those who want the Lord's will done if only they can be on the committee of "ways and means," and God's will be done in their way. (2) God's children are not to lose their wills; their wills are not "broken" nor absorbed in God's will, so that they have no will of their own; but they are to choose God's will as theirs, to will what he wills, strongly, positively, gladly, freely. (3) This petition implies that we desire God's will to be done in his providence toward us. This is much more than to be submissive. It is to recognize that whatever is God's will, and we know it to be so, we choose for ourselves as wisest and best. (4) It implies the desire that the whole world may obey God as perfectly as the angels. What changes, what revolutions, this requires in business, customs, fashions, habits! what thrones will be cast down! what fortunes dissipated! No wicked man dare pray this prayer. (5) It is a great privilege to be permitted to do God's will, to live on this higher plane, to ennoble every duty.

> "A servant with this clause
> Makes drudgery divine;
> Who sweeps a room as for thy laws
> Makes that and the action fine."

Fourth Petition. 11. **Give us this day our daily bread.** New light is thrown upon this petition by a comparison with its slightly varied form in Luke. Matthew says δός, *give*, in one act; Luke says δίδου, *be giving*, continuously. Matthew says *this day*, Luke says *day by day*. *Daily*, in the original, is a peculiar compound word, and may mean (1) *requisite, sufficient*, "*a supply that just comes up to and covers* our real wants *without overflowing*."[4] Or (2) "*for the incoming day*, the day just beginning."[5] "Give us to-day food *sufficing for the next*."[6]

1. This petition shows that God cares for our bodily wants. He knoweth that we "have need of all these things." He delights in our comfort, and "giveth us all things richly to enjoy." "In the present age, it is especially important to urge that men shall pray for temporal good, since so many think that the recognized presence of law in all temporal things puts them beyond the sphere of prayer, as if that would not exclude God from his universe."[7] The body is the instrument of the soul, and should be cared for as a musician cares for his violin, or an engineer for his engine. At the same time we are to note that out of seven petitions, "three for God's glory,

[1] Read E. E. Hale's *Man Without a Country*.
[2] See Carlyle's *Heroes and Hero Worship*.
[3] F. D. Maurice.
[4] Morison.
[5] Cambridge Bible.
[6] Thayer.
[7] Dr. Broadus.

12 And forgive us our debts, as we also [forgive] have forgiven our debtors.
13 And [r lead] bring us not into temptation, but [s deliver us from] the evil: [For thine is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory, for ever. Amen.] one.

r ch. 26. 41. Mark 14. 38. Luke 22. 40, 46. Cp. 1 Cor. 10. 13. s John 17. 15. 2 Thess. 3. 3. Cp. 2 Tim. 4. 18.
t See ch. 13. 19. u 1 Chr. 29. 11, 12 (for mg.).

and three for our souls," there is but one, this central one, for earthly things.

2. Give *us*. Every worldly good comes from God. No matter how much we must work for our daily living, still it is the gift of God, for he gives us the strength to work, and the opportunities, and controls the course of nature which supplies our wants. "Money is as powerless against flood and drought, frost and fire, rot and grub, as Pharaoh was against frog and fly, locust and darkness."[1] "All the science in the world cannot create one grain of wheat." Nor can all the wealth. This fact tends to make all worldly things draw us toward God. For on every worldly good we see the image and superscription of our heavenly Father, and a proof of his love.

"Each blessing to my soul most dear
Because conferred by thee."

3. It includes supplies of spiritual food, — food for the hungry heart, food for the taste, for every right hunger, food for the mind, food from heaven for the soul. Of what use is earthly food without the heavenly?

4. *Give* us. "Christ would not have us say, Give *me*. We will not ask *anything* for ourselves alone."[2] It is hard for us to realize how much benefit it is to our families to be gathered together two or three times a day around the table. Nothing but the necessity of eating could accomplish this. Eating together promotes friendship, sociability, generosity, and the intellectual life. Dr. Hamlin says that one of the greatest difficulties in Christianizing the East is that families do not eat together.

5. *Give us* our *daily bread*. The bread adapted to our needs, the bread we have earned by honest labor, if we are able to labor, not the bread of other people obtained by begging, or violence, or dishonesty. It is vastly better for us that we have a part in gaining what God gives us. We are co-workers with God.

6. *Our* daily *bread*. For we need it every day. Especially is this true of our spiritual supplies. The bread comes daily to teach us trust in God, and to recall daily to our minds the source of our supplies, with thanksgiving.

7. *Our daily* bread. The simple, necessary food, the best for us in kind and amount.

Fifth Petition. 12. **And forgive us our debts.** Take them away from us, both the penalty and the sins. Blot them out of the book of his remembrance, and restore us to God's favor, and home, and approval, so that we shall be treated as if we had never sinned. **Our debts** ὀφειλήματα. That which we owe to God and have not paid, as love, gratitude, obedience. Sin is recorded in our characters, our memories, in the world, and needs blotting out; and only God can do it, taking away the sin from our hearts, and taking away the evil consequences. "*Duty* — *i. e.*, that which we owe, or ought to do — and *debts* are, it may be noted, only different forms of the same word."[3] *Duty* is from *due*. *Ought* is the old preterite of owe, owed, ought.

Sin is an unpaid threefold debt against ourselves, our neighbors, and God. Two other words are used in connection with the Lord's Prayer to express sin. In the verses following the Lord's Prayer in Matthew *trespasses* is used, — *a falling away* or *throwing one's self aside* from truth, and righteousness, and a true life. In Luke the word used means *missing the mark*, sin as failure, — a failure to reach the destiny and the life God has prepared for us. **As we forgive our debtors**, or better, as R. V., "as we have forgiven" before we offer the prayer, or as we are accustomed to forgive. *As* expresses the manner in which we forgive. We ask God to forgive us in the same manner that we treat those who wrong us. See the parable of the Unmerciful Servant, ch. 18: 21–35. It also expresses the condition on which alone forgiveness can be granted. (See on vers. 14, 15.)

A Warning. How terrible it is for an unforgiving man to pray this prayer![4]

There are many words in the Bible to express sin in its many aspects, — as ὀφειλήματα, *debts*; ἁμαρτία, *missing the mark*; ἀνομία, *lawlessness*; παρακοή, *hearing amiss* or *disobedience*; παράβασις, *trespass*, *going across the boundary*, *transgression*; παράπτωμα, *fault*, *falling aside*, *moral aberration*; ἥττημα, *defeat*, *discomfiture*; ἀσέβεια, *impiousness*; πλημμέλεια, *disharmony*, a metaphor from music.

For all these kinds of sin we need forgiveness. And there are as many words for *forgiveness* as for *sins*, — forgive, remit, send away, cover up, blot out, destroy, wash away, cleanse, make them as if they had never been.

Sixth Petition. 13. **And lead us not into**

[1] Boardman, *The Kingdom*.
[2] Farrar.
[3] Ellicott.
[4] See "The Prayer of the Unforgiving Man," in Arbp. Augustus Hare's *Alton Sermons*.

temptation. The R. V. translates "**bring us,**" but the meaning is the same, — Thou, who art the guide of our life, lead us, but away from temptation. Temptation is trial, proving, the conditions meant to test our characters, our choices. Now God tests us thus, as gold is tried in the fire. "But God brings us into temptation knowing that he can bring us safely out." Satan uses these same trials to seduce, allure, and incite us to do wrong.

Temptations come from three sources: from the adversary the devil, from outward circumstances, and from our own natures.

Temptations are of two kinds, — one typified by malaria, a bad moral atmosphere, weakening the nature, and bringing disease before we are aware of it; the other, like the sudden assault of an army, attacking from an ambush. Farrar typifies the first by the adder, which comes noiselessly, gradually, insidiously; of the other his type is the wild beast, suddenly springing on its prey, "terrible with tiger's leaps," representing the violence, the fury, the raging assaults of sin.

NOTE. (1) We desire to be led away from temptation, because we know something of our weakness and danger. For to yield is ruin. Whoever wishes to be led into temptation, and is not afraid lest he fall, is already more than half fallen. "Above all, you who are young be sure of this: he who tampers with temptation is lost. There is but one rule about temptation; namely,

> 'Think it as a serpent's egg,
> Which, hatched, would, as his kind, grow mischievous,
> And kill it in the shell.'" [1]

(2) If God in his wisdom brings us into trials and tests, then "we may count it all joy," and by God's strength gain the victory (James 1 : 2). (3) While trials and temptations are necessary to the highest virtue and noblest character, we do not know what trials are best for us. We do not know our weakness. God only knows. What is a test to one is destruction to another. The fire that purifies the gold destroys a tree. (4) "No one can ask honestly or hopefully to be delivered from temptation unless he has himself honestly and firmly determined to do the best he can to keep out of it." [2] (5) Whenever God leads us into trials, we may know that he has provided a way of escape.[3] (6) We have an example of this prayer in Christ's threefold prayer in Gethsemane.

SEVENTH PETITION. **But deliver us from evil.** "The evil," not "the *evil one*," as in the R. V., for that narrows and belittles the prayer, but from evil, every evil, temporal and spiritual, including the evil one. The great evil of the world is sin, the source and fountain of nearly all the other evils in the world. The Greek may mean either "the evil" or "the evil one." This is the climax of the prayer, as it is the object of Christ's coming into the world.

"'When we pray '*Deliver us from evil*,' we pray against everything which ruins and makes us wretched; against the slavery of sin; against all the fury, cunning, and malignity of the devil or of man; against

> 'Wasted lands,
> Blight and famine, plague and earthquake, roaring deeps and fiery sands,
> Clanging fights, and flaming towns, and sinking ships.'

It is against all the trouble, and pain, and confusion, worse than death, which sin has brought into the world we should uplift our souls in prayer." [4]

HOW GOD DELIVERS US FROM EVIL. (1) By redeeming us from sin, the source of all evil, forgiving the past, renewing our natures, taking away the love of sin, and the practice of sin, through Jesus Christ, and the renewing of the Holy Spirit. (2) He delivers us from evil, by helping us to watch and pray and fight against it. We are not to run into temptation, but when we do meet it, we are not to run away, but to fight like men and heroes against it. (3) God does permit his children to suffer from many outward evils and wrongs. There are two ways in which God may deliver us from them: one is by warding them off, protecting us from them, and this he does every day of our lives; the other is to compel them to work together for our good, for deliverance from the far greater evil of sin. They work out for us "a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory." [5] Outward evils to a wicked man are entirely different from the same evils to a good man. The latter is like Daniel in the lions' den, with the angels shutting their mouths; the former like his enemies who were consumed before they had reached the floor of the den. (4) He drives out evil from the heart by filling it with good, with joy, and all the fruits of the Spirit. (5) He delivers us from evil by setting us to work for him. The top stands as long as it spins. (6) The mark on the forehead of a child of God is the intensity of his desire to be delivered from all sin, from every speck and stain of sin.

THE CONCLUSION. The rest of this verse is not found in the oldest MSS., and the R. V. puts it in the margin. But it has some good authority, and almost every word of it is found in other parts of the Scripture, and "in all probability deriving its sanction from the teaching of the

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[1] Farrar.

[2] Ruskin.

[3] The tract *Parley the Porter*. Rogers' *Greyson Letters*, "The Madman and the Devil." The poem "Lord with what care hast thou begirt us round!" quoted in Hare's *Mission of the Comforter*, p. 80.

[4] Farrar.

[5] See Dante's *Purgatorio*,

14 [v] For if ye forgive men their trespasses, your heavenly Father will also forgive you:

15 [w] But if ye forgive not men their trespasses, neither will your Father forgive your trespasses.

16 ¶ Moreover [x] when ye fast, be not, as the hypocrites, of a sad countenance: for they disfigure their faces, that they may (appear unto be seen of) men to fast. [y] Verily I say unto you, They have (received) their reward.

v Mark 11. 25. Luke 6. 37. Eph. 4. 32. Col. 3. 13. *w* ch. 18. 35. See James 2. 13. *x* Isai. 58. 5. *y* ver. 2, 5.

Spirit of God, as far back as the age of the apostles."[1]

For. Here is the reason why God can answer all this prayer; why we can come to him in confidence. **Thine.** Belonging to thee, as thy right and as thy actual possession. **The kingdom.** The rule over all things, nature, man, the hosts of heaven, all natural and spiritual forces. All belong to our Father. He controls all. The fact that some rebel and disobey his laws does not take the kingdom from him, any more than criminals in a country destroy its government. The complete rule over all hearts is our Father's right, and his kingdom is sure to come. **The power.** The ability to answer these petitions, and to grant these gifts, implying absolute omnipotence. **And the glory.** Nowhere on earth does God's glory, the outshining of his goodness, shine so brightly as in answering this prayer. **For ever.** This word widens the vision, ennobles the soul. The issues of the prayer are eternal. **Amen.** So be it. So may it be fulfilled. The word means truth, reality, verily. In the Old Testament it is given as a title of God (Isai. 65: 16), and in the New as a title of Christ (Rev. 3: 14).

A LESSON ON FORGIVENESS, vers. 14, 15.

Jesus takes up one of the points in the prayer, and enlarges on it, because of its importance, its difficulty, and of its being a necessary condition of true prayer, and absolutely essential to its being answered. He gives, as Trench expresses it, "one blow more to the die, so as to make the impression sharper and deeper on the minds of all."

14. **For if ye forgive men their trespasses.** See on ver. 12. The word indicates reckless and wilful sin, conscious violations of right; the hardest sins to forgive. The forgiveness must be real, from the heart, a forgetting, a practical blotting out, a treating the repentant one as if he had not sinned. **Your heavenly Father will . . . forgive you.** Because it shows that we are in that penitent condition which makes forgiveness possible for us, and good for us. We realize what sin is, and what it means to forgive, and we hate the sin whose sting we have felt.

15. **But if ye forgive not.** God cannot forgive under such circumstances without by the very act increasing sin, and injuring the one forgiven. For it shows that we have not repented.[2] God is forgiving, ever ready to forgive, but the forgiveness would be like rain on the desert.

"You say that the desert is a desert because no rain falls upon it; but that is only half the truth. No rain falls upon it because it is a desert. So in your heart this forgiving disposition must be, else you cannot rejoice in the fulness of God's forgiving grace. The pardon may wait in the sky above you, but it cannot descend to you."[3]

A LESSON ON FASTING, vers. 16–18.

Jesus now reverts again to the great principle of morality he laid down in ver. 1, and makes another application of it.

16. **When ye fast,** present tense, "are fasting." The Pharisees had reduced fasting to a formal system of outward observance (Luke 18: 12). **As the hypocrites,** see on ver. 2. **Of a sad countenance,** sour, dreary, with a downcast look of grief or pain, as if they were exceedingly sorry for their sins, which sorrow fasting was intended to express.

For they disfigure their faces, conceal, mask them, so that they do not appear as they really are, "by putting ashes on their faces, neglecting the ordinary washing and anointing, and the dressing of the hair and beard."[4]

In the Greek "disfigure" is the negative of the word for "appear," that follows. There is a kind of play on the words. They cause their natural looks to "disappear," **that they may appear unto men to fast,** and thus seem to be deeply religious, so that men will say, "How good, how pious these men are!" It was a rabbinical proverb, "Whoever makes his face black in this world, God shall make his face to shine in the world to come."

They have their reward, see ver. 2. They

[1] Farrar.
[2] See the soliloquy of the king of Denmark in *Hamlet*, Act III., Scene 3.
[3] Washington Gladden, D. D.
[4] G. W. Clark.

17 But thou, when thou fastest, [z] anoint (thine: thy) head, and wash thy face;
18 (That: that) thou (appear: be) not (unto: seen of) men to fast, but (unto: of) thy Father which is in secret: [a] and thy Father, which seeth in secret, shall (reward: recompense) thee. openly.
19 ¶ [b] Lay not up for yourselves treasures upon the earth, where [c] moth and rust doth (corrupt: consume), and where thieves [d] break through and steal:

z Ruth 3. 3. 2 Sam. 12. 20. Dan. 10. 3, *al.* *a* ver. 4, 6. *b* ch. 19. 21. Luke 12. 21, 33, 34 & 18. 22. 1 Tim. 6. 9, 10, 17–19. Heb. 13. 5. *c* James 5. 2, 3. *d* ch. 24. 43. Luke 12. 39 (& mg. for mg.).

gained in some measure what they sought, but Paradise was but an apple of Sodom filled with the gall of envy; and the seeming fruit of the honey of man's applause was mingled with the ashes of blighted character and a consumed heart.

17. **But thou, when thou fastest.** It was purely voluntary whether they should fast or not. It should depend on whether a time came when it would accomplish a spiritual purpose. Evidently Jesus expected that they would fast (Mark 9: 29; Luke 5: 33, 34).

The Use of Fasting. (1) Fasting would seem to have its basis in, first, a grief over sin so deep and intense that all desire for food is taken away; or such a strong desire for holiness, for the progress of God's work, for the removal of all that hinders it, that we forget to eat. (2) Therefore it implies that we are doing that which fasting expresses. It is saying, I desire this good gift of God more than food, more than bodily pleasure, more than all else besides. So putting away every sin at any cost, taking up hardest duties, confession of sin to our neighbors, doing all we can for the love of Christ, are expressions of the same principle which underlies fasting. (3) The second basis of fasting is in the aid to devotion furnished by a body unburdened with food, so as to leave the mind and heart in their most active and free condition. The Puritans called it "soul-fattening fasting," and so many have found it. Both bodily and spiritual disease may sometimes "be *starved* out of the system." Exactly the same principle is employed by all our college athletes in preparation for a great contest. They go without, they fast from, many good things which they freely use at other times. They exercise rigid bodily self-denial. There are spiritual conflicts which need the same regimen. (4) Every good feeling is increased by its natural expression.

Anoint thine head, and wash thy face. Appear before men as in your usual condition. Draw not the attention of men, by any peculiarity of appearance or demeanor, to thine own secret transaction with God.[1]

18. **Unto thy Father . . . in secret.** For it is a religious act; and the outward form, for the sake of seeming what one is not, ruins all its spiritual power. **Reward thee openly.** See on ver. 4.

VI. APPLICATIONS TO THE AIM AND PURPOSE OF LIFE, 6: 19–34.

The Supreme Choice of Treasure. It must be Treasure on Earth or Treasure in Heaven. Five Reasons for laying up our Treasure in Heaven.

First Reason. Because earthly treasures are transient, and heavenly treasures are eternal.

19. **Lay not up for yourselves treasures upon earth.** Literally, treasure not treasures for yourselves.[2]

Our treasure is that which we regard as first and chief, to gain which we will sacrifice other things; accumulating them for their own sake, setting our heart on them, making them the object of life. We treasure up earthly treasures, such as money, wealth, honors, pleasures, not when we merely possess and use them, but when we obtain or retain them at the cost of honesty, truth, religion, benevolence, when we make them an end instead of an instrument. The smallest of earthly possessions may be "a treasure on earth," and the greatest may help to lay up treasures in heaven.

Where moth and rust doth corrupt. The Orientals had no savings banks, no bonds, in which to invest their wealth; hence costly garments were a favorite way of hoarding wealth. But these had one deadly enemy, the moth. "Oriental travellers speak of whole suits of garments being reduced to a lace-work of shreds in a single night."[3] "The moth-eaten, moth-destroyed garment is but a sample of the ephemeral nature of all earthly treasures."[4] **And rust.** Rust is from a word meaning to eat, as corrode is from the Latin *rodo*, to gnaw. **Corrupt** is the same Greek word that is used of the fasting hypocrites who *disfigure* their faces, cause their beauty to *disappear;* hence, to consume, to destroy. It is spoken not only of treasure hidden in the ground, but of houses, books, and perishable treasures.

[1] Morison.

[2] A good illustration is the beautiful legend of King Gondoforus and St. Thomas, told in Mrs. Jameson's *Sacred and Legendary Art.* It is found also in poetic form.

[3] Compare the ravages of white ants, in Prof. Drummond's *Tropical Africa.*

[4] Boardman.

20 [b] But lay up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where neither moth nor rust doth corrupt, consume, and where thieves do not break through nor steal:
21 For where your treasure is, there will your heart be also.
22 [c] The light of the body is the eye: if therefore thine eye be single, thy whole body shall be full of light.
23 [c] But if [f] thine eye be evil, thy whole body shall be full of darkness. If therefore the light that is in thee be darkness, how great is the darkness!

b See under ver. 19. *c* Luke 11. 34, 35. *f* ch. 20. 15. Deut. 15. 9. Prov. 28. 22. Mark 7. 22, *al.*

Where thieves break through. Lit., "dig through" the mud walls of a house. The Greek name for a burglar is "wall-digger." In a multitude of ways earthly treasures are lost or stolen, — property, health, friendship, honors, pleasures, are all fleeting and uncertain in outward form.

20. **But lay up for yourselves treasures in heaven.**[1] God wants us to be rich, but with riches toward God, heavenly treasures. This refers indeed to the blessedness of heaven, all its rewards, its glories, its joys, but chiefly to the kind of treasures which make these things natural and possible, which make heaven what it is, — treasures of character, of enlarged being, of good deeds, of blessed work done, of souls made better, of faith, love, peace, godliness, brotherly kindness, honesty, meekness, and all the fruits of the spirit. These heavenly riches we may acquire and enjoy here. They cannot be taken away because they are a part of our being; we take them with us wherever we go.

Second Reason, ver. 21.

21. **For where your treasure is.** That which you most prize and love and seek for; that into which you put your life. **There will your heart be also.**[2] "The *heart* is spoken of in Scripture, not according to our modern view, as the seat of the affections only, but as the seat of all the powers of the soul, both intellect, sensibilities, and will."[3] (1) The treasure is a *test* as to where the heart is. How do we know where our heart is? Find our treasure. (2) The treasure is a *means* by which we can bring our heart into the right place. It is a loadstone which draws to it our affections, our thoughts, our care. We complain that there are some good things in which we cannot feel much interest. The cure is to invest in them, put labor, care, thought into them, and the heart will follow. Thus we become interested in the Bible, in the poor, in missions, in any department of Christian work, by investing our treasures in them.

Third Reason. Because this alone can carry us safely through life. Shown by an illustration, vers. 22, 23.

22. **The light.** "Rather *lamp*, or *candle* as it is translated in ch. 5: 15. The eye is not itself the light, but contains the light, it is the *lamp* or candle of the body, the light-conveying principle.[4] The actions of the whole body, both in providing for its own wants, and in its work for others, are guided by the eye. Just so the heart, the supreme affection, and choice of the soul, determine the life and conduct. **If therefore thine eye be single,** (ἁπλοῦς, without folds, like the Latin *simplex*, from *semel*, once, and *plico*, to fold), if the eye see only one image, and that clearly and not double, giving a dim and confused picture. **Thy whole body shall be full of light.** Everything shall be clear and plain for the whole body which is guided by the eye. The man will not grope blindly, groping about, and uncertain which is the way because the eye sees two of each thing, and the man does not know which is the real one. So if the heart, the eye of the soul, has one supreme purpose to serve God and lay up heavenly treasures, and is not confused by seeking other aims, and by worldly attractions, the path of duty will be clearly seen, and the questions as to what to do easily decided.

23. **But if thine eye be evil,** be a bad eye for seeing, so that one is confused, sees double, "sees men as trees walking." **Thy whole body shall be full of darkness,** groping in ignorance, uncertain as to truth and duty, and certain to go astray. Compare Lot's wife.

> "All seems infected that the infected spy,
> As all seems yellow to the jaundiced eye."

The heart colors everything. Nothing is seen in its true colors, but as if seen through a Claude Lorraine glass.[5]

The light that is in thee, that which is meant to guide you, which you trust, **be darkness,** misleading, confused, so that the more you follow

[1] See Trench's *Poems*, "The Banished Kings."

[2] See the story of the students who found a stone inscribed, "Here lies the soul of Peter Garcia," and taking it up found 100 gold pieces, in preface of *Gil Blas*.

[3] Broadus.

[4] Cambridge Bible.

[5] See Scott's *Redgauntlet*. Allan Fairford's letter to Darsie Latimer.

24 ¶ [g] No man can serve two masters: for either he will hate the one, and love the other; or else he will hold to [the] one, and despise the other. Ye cannot serve God and [h] mammon.

25 [i] Therefore I say unto you, [j] [Take no thought, Be not anxious] for your life, what ye shall eat, or what ye shall drink; nor yet for your body, what ye shall put on. Is not the life more than [the food, meat,] and the body than [the] raiment?

g Luke 16. 13. Cp. Rom. 6. 16 & James 4. 4. *h* Luke 16. 9, 11, 13. *i* For ver. 25–33, see Luke 12. 22–31.
j ver. 27, 28, 31, 34. ch. 10. 19 & 13. 22 (Gk.). 1 Cor. 7. 32 (Gk.). Phil. 4. 6. 1 Pet. 5. 7.

it, the farther away you will be from the right place. You will form wrong judgments, because they are founded on wrong impressions.

How great is that darkness. The light that misleads is worse than darkness. The false guide is worse than none. The eye that presents phantoms for realities is worse than no eye. The will-of-the-wisp that seems a lighthouse is worse than no light, and leads to certain disaster.

FOURTH REASON. BECAUSE EVERY ONE MUST CHOOSE BETWEEN ONE OR THE OTHER, AND THEREFORE SHOULD MAKE CHOICE OF THE BEST, ver. 24.

24. **No man can serve two masters.** Who are distinct and opposite in character and demands, who belong to different kingdoms, each with its own separate interest. The Greek word for *the other* (ἕτερον) in this verse means not merely another person, but one of different quality. "It gives the idea of two masters distinct and opposite in character." To serve two such masters is simply as impossible in the nature of things as going in opposite directions at the same time. **Either he will hate the one, and love the other.** Because they are diametrically opposed to one another. If one loves truth, he must hate lying. If one loves goodness, he must hate evil. **And despise the other.** By refusing to obey his commands, or carry out his principles. **Ye cannot serve God and mammon.** Mammon is a Syriac word meaning riches or wealth. It is the commonest form in which Satan appears and in which men serve him. "Satan is the prince of this world, but mammon is his prime minister." "The love of money is a root of all evil." [1]

> "Mammon led them on:
> Mammon, the least erected spirit that fell
> From heaven; for e'en in heaven his looks and thoughts
> Were always downward bent, admiring more
> The riches of heaven's pavement, trodden gold,
> Than aught divine or holy, else enjoyed
> In vision beatific." [2]

"God will put up with a great many things in the human heart, but there is one thing he will not put up with in it, — a second place. He who offers God a second place offers him no place." [3]

Wealth can be used for either master. The real test comes when we must choose between right and wrong, between riches and character, between honest poverty and selfish wealth. It is not a question of the amount of riches, but of the way it is obtained, and of the use of what we have honestly gained. It is not the being rich, that is wrong, but the serving of riches, instead of making them serve God and our neighbor as well as ourselves. Riches are like fire, which is a good servant but a bad master.

FIFTH REASON. BECAUSE GOD HIMSELF WILL CARE FOR THE EARTHLY NEEDS OF THOSE WHO LAY UP THEIR TREASURE IN HEAVEN, vers. 25–34.

25. **Therefore I say unto you,** in order that you may choose the service of God, without fear; for anxiety about worldly things is one chief reason why men serve mammon. **Take no thought.** Be not anxious, troubled, μὴ μεριμνᾶτε, from μερίς, *a part*, μερίζω, *to be drawn in different directions, distracted*. Or it is derived from a Greek word meaning *earnest thoughtfulness*. The translation in our common version has misled many, and troubled many a tender conscience. "*Take thought*, in this passage, was a truthful rendering when the A. V. was made, since *thought* was then used as equivalent to *anxiety* or *solicitude*. So Shakespeare (*Hamlet*): —

> 'The native hue of resolution
> Is sicklied o'er with the pale cast of *thought*.'

And Bacon (*Henry VII.*): 'Hawis, an alderman of London, was put in trouble, and died with *thought* and anguish.' Somers' *Tracts* (in Queen Elizabeth's reign): 'Queen Catherine Parr died rather of *thought*.' The word has entirely lost this meaning. Bishop Lightfoot (*On a fresh revision of the New Testament*) says: 'I have heard of a political economist alleging this passage as an

[1] Jacox, *Scripture Proverbs*, p. 509, "Mammon Worship," gives many references to literature. A capital illustration of the attempt to serve two masters, if a failure, is found in Stevenson's *The Strange Case of Dr. Jekyl and Mr. Hyde*. On the other hand, the victory of the good by throwing off the yoke of the bad master, and serving the good is set forth in Lynde Palmer's *John-Jack*.

[2] Milton's description of Mammon, in *Paradise Lost*, I. 678 ff.

[3] Ruskin.

26 [k] Behold the fowls (birds) of the air (heaven, that): for they sow not, neither do they reap, nor gather into barns; yet (and) your heavenly Father feedeth them. [l] Are not ye of (not) much better (more value) than they?

27 Which (And which) of you by taking thought (being anxious) can add one cubit unto his [m] stature?

k Cp. Job 38. 41 & Ps. 147. 9. l ch. 10. 31. m Luke 2. 52. Cp. Ps. 39. 5 (for mg.).

objection to the moral teaching of the Sermon on the Mount, on the ground that it encouraged, nay, commanded, a reckless neglect of the future.' It is uneasiness and worry about the future which our Lord condemns here, and therefore R. V. rightly translates *be not anxious*. This phase of the word is forcibly brought out in 1 Pet. 5: 7, where the A. V. ignores the distinction between the two kinds of care. 'Casting all your *care* (μέριμναν, R. V., *anxiety*) upon him, for he *careth* (αὐτῷ μέλει) for you,' with a fatherly, tender, and provident care."[1] **For your life, what ye shall eat,** to support life. **Your body.** Shelter and clothing, together with food, constitute a large part of the natural, physical wants of man. Most of the business of the world centres in these things.

It is a curious fact that there is far more anxiety about the future in Christian countries than in many heathen lands, and that Christian lands lay up more wealth, toil harder, look out more for the future.[2]

1. The circumstances are very different. In heathen lands there is a hopeless uncertainty that makes care for the future more useless.

2. A large part of the anxiety is from worldly people, not Christians.

3. The promise in ver. 33 assures the abundance which permits and even tempts to this anxiety, and the warning is given because this danger was foreseen. Where there is no opportunity there is no temptation, and no victory over it, resulting in character.

4. This command does not tend to idleness or want of thrift, or to poverty, but, on the contrary, to the best prosperity, and to the best enjoyment of whatever God gives us. While over-anxiety tends to dishonesty, to crime, to selfishness, to disappointment, and to bitterness of spirit.

IF GOD CARES FOR THE LESSER, MAY YOU NOT BE SURE THAT HE WILL CARE FOR THE GREATER?

Is not the life more than meat, which sustains the life? The argument is twofold. (1) Since God has given life, will he not see that means of sustaining life are given with it? For the one gift is vain without the other. (2) We should give our chief attention to the life, the true life, and the lesser things will come in due measure. Our business is to forget self and its anxieties in the desire to serve God and man.

> "A heart at leisure from itself
> To soothe and sympathize."[3]

IF GOD CARES FOR THE BIRDS, WILL HE NOT CARE FOR HIS CHILDREN?

26. **Behold the fowls of the air.** "Fowls" was used in Old English for birds in general. Birds were exceedingly abundant in Galilee, and doubtless Jesus at this very time could point to the birds within sight of his hearers.

For they sow not, neither do they reap. "The birds are not idle; in their own way they work, and work for their daily food." God has many means besides barns for supplying our daily wants. **Yet your.** Note the *your*, not *their*, the Father whose children you are. **Your heavenly Father feedeth them.** Not in idleness, not by putting food in their mouths while they sit still in the trees and sing and wait; but by providing the food which they can obtain, and providing them with the means of seeing and obtaining food. Not idleness, but industry, is taught us by God's care of the birds. They build nests, they migrate to warmer climes when food fails them in the North, they are up early seeking food. **Are ye not much better,** of more value, **than they?** Did you ever hear of a father who fed the birds, but starved his children?

AGAIN, ANXIETY IS USELESS. 27. **Which of you by taking thought,** by being anxious. No degree of anxiety **can add one cubit.** A measure 18 to 21 inches long, originally the length from the elbow to the end of the middle finger, and hence varying with the size of people. "Ell" has the same derivation. **Unto his stature,** or his age, the duration of his life. The Greek word has both meanings, *age* and *stature*, and either one gives an adequate meaning. Many a very short person would give a fortune to add a cubit to his stature. I knew one person who said that an increase of stature would have been worth a thousand dollars an inch to him. But nearly every one would be glad to add a cubit to his age, regarding his age (as in Ps. 39: 5) as a span, or

[1] Prof. M. R. Vincent, *Word Studies*.

[2] See Wm. B. Wright's *Master and Men*, "Puzzles," the title of the first chapter on the "Sermon on the Mount." See, also, Van Dyke's *Gospel for an Age of Doubt*, pp. 283, 284.

[3] Miss Waring, *Poems*. See the whole poem.

28 And why take are ye thought for anxious concerning raiment? Consider the lilies of the field, how they grow; they toil not, neither do they spin:

29 And yet I say unto you, That that even Sŏl'o-mon in all his glory was not arrayed like one of these.

n 1 Kin. 10. 4–7.

conceiving of life as a race or journey. One near to death is reported to have said, "Millions of money for an *inch* of time!" Yet, since one by carefulness, as Morison says, may lengthen his life, or by carelessness shorten it, but cannot by any means add to his stature, it is probable that Jesus refers to stature and not to life. Still, no one ever added to his life by anxiety.

There are a thousand things connected with our welfare that are as much beyond our control as the march of the stars through the sky. "A man," says Bishop Hurst, "can no more create his bread for a single meal than he can create a planet." Let us commit all that part of our lives to God, without anxiety, and only see to it that we do our duty, serving him faithfully, carrying out the principles of his kingdom.

THE SAME TRUTH IS TAUGHT BY THE FLOWERS. 28. **Consider the lilies . . . how they grow.** Many were doubtless on every hand within sight of his hearers. "'Lilies' is here, as often elsewhere in the original languages, to be taken generally for 'the flower of the field.' In late winter the regions over which Jesus walked are clothed most gorgeously. Most conspicuous,

Scarlet Lily.

perhaps, are the great blue and red flowers of the order *Ranunculaceæ*, where the anemone and the ranunculus grow together. They are not small things, like our buttercups, but great wide flowers of two inches or more in diameter, carpeting the ground with patches as gorgeous as masses of

Lily of Palestine.

our brilliant verbenas. They grow everywhere; and, like the other herbs, are glorious one day, and the next day literally cast into the oven to bake the peasant's bread."[1] **They toil not, neither do they spin.** They do not work in man's way for their gorgeous array. They simply live in the way God intended, and fulfil their mission.

29. **Solomon in all his glory was not arrayed like one of these.** "The Hûleh lily is very large; and the three inner petals meet above, and form a gorgeous canopy, such as art never approached, and king never sat under, even in his utmost glory. And when I met this incomparable flower, in all its loveliness, among the oak woods around the north base of Tabor and on the hills of Nazareth, where our Lord spent his youth, I felt assured that it was to this he referred."[2]

"In two respects this declaration is literally true: first, because his glory was external, glory put on, while that of the flower is its own, a being developed from within; second, because the beauty of the most perfect fabric is imperfect, and shows itself rough and coarse under the microscope, while the beauty of the flower has no imperfection, but, on the contrary, discloses

[1] Isaac Hall, D. D., in *Sunday-School Times*.

[2] Thomson, *Land and Book*.

30 Wherefore, But if God doth so clothe the grass of the field, which to day to-day is, and to morrow to-morrow is cast into the oven, *shall he* not much more *clothe* you,[o] O ye of little faith?

31 Therefore take no thought, Be not therefore anxious, saying, What shall we eat? or, What shall we drink? or, Wherewithal shall we be clothed?

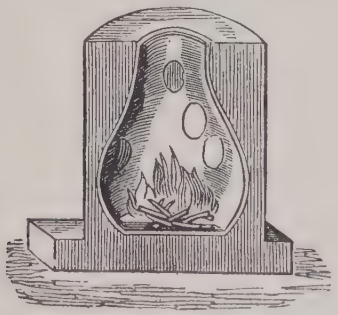
32 (For after all these things do the p Gentiles seek:) For after all these things do the Gentiles seek;[q] for your heavenly Father knoweth that ye have need of all these things.

33 But [r] seek ye first [s] the his kingdom, of God, and his righteousness; [t] and all these things shall be added unto you.

o ch. 8. 26 & 14. 31 & 16. 8. Cp. ch. 17. 20. *p* ver. 7. *q* ver. 8. *r* Cp. ch. 5. 6, 20. *s* ver. 10. *t* Cp. 1 Kin. 3. 11–14 & Mark 10. 29, 30 & 1 Tim. 4. 8 & 1 Pet. 3. 9.

under the microscope glories unseen by the naked eye."[1] "The meaning hidden beneath the text should not escape the student. As the beauty of the flower is unfolded by the divine Creator Spirit from *within*, from the laws and capacities of its *own* individual life, so must all true adornment of man be unfolded *from within* by the same Almighty Spirit (see 1 Pet. 3 : 3, 4). As nothing from without can defile a man, so neither can anything from without adorn him."[2]

30. **If God so clothe the grass of the field.** All the herbage. **To morrow is cast into the oven.** "A large jar made of clay." "Owing to



Oven.

a scarcity of fuel, this dried vegetation is still often used to heat ovens for baking bread." **Shall he not much more clothe you,** his children, who are trying to serve him. **O ye of little faith.** In comparison with the faith you ought to have, contrasted with the worthiness of God to be trusted, his loving kindness that delights to minister to the wants of his children.

Sometimes it is hard to believe that the infinite God, who holds the seas in his hand, and controls the stars in their courses, should care for each individual soul. We are so small, and God's universe is so great! We are but insects on a world which is but a grain of sand to many of the stars. But it is the greatness of God that he cares for the animalculæ that swim in a dewdrop as fish in the ocean, as perfectly as for a world. If God cares for the atoms and molecules, if he provides for birds and flowers, for the insects of an hour, for the bees, "the singing masons building roofs of gold," how much more will he care for the souls and bodies of his children, made in his own likeness!

> "I know not where his islands lift
> Their fronded palms in air;
> I only know I cannot drift
> Beyond his love and care."[3]

31. **Therefore take no thought.** Be not anxious. This is the conclusion of the argument.

32. **For.** Giving the first of two reasons. **After all these things do the Gentiles seek.** The heathen, the other nations without the true religion. This is what you would expect of those who know nothing of our heavenly Father. Worldliness and distrust are heathenish. **For.** Giving the second reason. **Your heavenly Father knoweth that ye have need of all these things.** He does not forbid your wants, but supplies them. Your distrust arises from not knowing your Father. God loves to have you happy. He delights in your good. It is no pleasure to him to deprive you of any good thing. Only he wants you first of all to be good, to be heavenly, to have those qualities which make blessedness immortal. And sometimes he must deprive us of lesser good that we may possess the greater.

33. **But seek ye first.** Both in time and importance. Make it your chief end and aim in all you do. **The kingdom of God.** God's reign (1) in our own hearts, so that we long to do his will as it is done in heaven, and (2) that his kingdom may prevail over the whole earth. Lest there should be any misunderstanding, he adds, **and his righteousness.** God's righteousness; a life and character like God's, which he approves and desires for all his creatures. This righteousness

[1] Lyman Abbott. [2] Alford. [3] Whittier.

34 [u] Take / Be not therefore no thought / anxious for the morrow: for the morrow shall take thought / will be anxious for the things of itself. Sufficient unto the day is / is the evil thereof.

u Cp. James 4. 13, 14.

is the characteristic of his kingdom. **And all these things**: food, clothing, and all that is necessary to our welfare. **Shall be added unto you.** Shall be given in addition. God will see that these necessary wants are supplied. So Jesus a little later on said to his disciples: "There is no man that hath left house, or parents, or brethren, or wife, or children, for the kingdom of God's sake, who shall not receive manifold more in this present time, and in the world to come life everlasting" (Luke 18 : 29, 30). "He who buys a treasure of jewels hath the cabinet into the bargain."[1] "He who buys goods has paper and twine flung in."[2] So many of them as are needed shall be *added*, or *thrown into the bargain*, as it were; and, if it would be well, they shall be added in great abundance.[3] "Other things being equal, the good man prospers better in worldly affairs than the bad man. All the vices are expensive and losing, as all the virtues are gainful and thrifty."[4] The map of the world is unimpeachable proof of this statement. The more Christian a nation, the more it has of this world's blessings. And most of the losses, strikes, failures, disasters in business, come directly or indirectly from seeking mammon first, and not the kingdom of God. This is true of communities. It is a general law that any city or State which cares most for religion, and education, and righteousness, that puts spiritual things first, is on the road to the highest and truest prosperity. But it does not mean that worldly success is given to individuals in proportion to their piety, or there soon would be little piety to reward. But the seeming loss is made up in spiritual things, in inward peace, usefulness, and character.[5]

34. **Take therefore no thought for the morrow.** Be not troubled, distracted, anxious, about the future. **For the morrow shall take thought for . . . itself.** "Not 'take care of itself,' but bring its own cares and anxieties;' do not foolishly increase those of to-day by borrowing from the morrow."[6] "But also with the anxiety, it will bring the grace that is needed to bear it, or the guidance that is needed to escape it."[7] **Sufficient unto the day is the evil thereof.** For each day God has appointed just enough of trials and burdens for that day's good. It is a great blessing that we do not know the future, for if we did, every sorrow and trial would be lived over and over, and cast its terrible shadow upon the whole life. Nor would there be the necessary training of faith. Moreover, it is a dismal folly to be borrowing trouble and crossing bridges before we come to them. The French proverb is true, "The worst misfortunes are those which never arrive," and a large part of our unhappiness arises from the dread of that which never comes. The cure is simple trust in the goodness and love of our heavenly Father.

[1] Reynolds.
[2] M. Henry.
[3] Morison.
[4] Livermore.
[5] See Whately's *Annotations*, p. 370, for excellent remarks on this distinction.
[6] Schaff.
[7] Lyman Abbott.

CHAPTER 7.

SECTION VII. — PRINCIPLES OF THE KINGDOM (*continued*).

7. GUARDS AGAINST INSIDIOUS DANGERS TO THE RELIGIOUS SPIRIT, 7: 1–6.
   Judging Others.
   Motes and Beams.
   Pearls and Swine.
8. THE MEANS OF OBTAINING AND SUSTAINING THE NEW LIFE, 7–11.
9. THE GOLDEN RULE. THE SUM OF THE SERMON, 12.
10. AN EXHORTATION TO ENTER THE NEW LIFE, 13, 14.
11. TESTS, FOR OURSELVES AND OTHERS, 15–27.

Time.

Midsummer, A. D. 28.

Place.

A mountain near the Sea of Galilee.

1 [v] JUDGE not, that ye be not judged.
2 [w] For with what judgment (judgement) ye judge, ye shall be judged: and [x] with what measure ye mete, it shall be measured (to) you. (again.)

v For ver. 1–5, see Luke 6. 37, 38, 41, 42. Cp. Rom. 14. 13 & 1 Cor. 4. 5 & James 5. 9. *w* Rom. 2. 1, 3 & 14. 10. James 2. 13 & 4. 11, 12. *x* Mark 4. 24. Cp. Judg. 1. 7.

VII. GUARDS AGAINST INSIDIOUS DANGERS TO THE RELIGIOUS LIFE, 7: 1–6.

A WARNING AGAINST JUDGING OTHERS, vers. 1, 2.

1. **Judge not.** The word "judge" here does not mean *form an opinion*, for every one must do this of many persons and things (Luke 12: 57; John 7: 24). It means *censorious judging, condemning, imputing wrong motives*, putting the worst and not the best construction on the actions or words of others. This command forbids us to *sit in judgment* upon the conduct of others, forming and expressing opinions upon that of which it is impossible for us to know all the facts. "Condemn not, that ye be not condemned." "Even a very silly man's actions are often more to the purpose than his friends' comments upon them." We tend to judge others by one fault, and forget their many virtues; to judge of the bay when the tide is out, and the career by one mistake. The chronic faultfinder cannot be a true critic or judge; for criticism is not faultfinding, but forming a true estimate. The smallest mind can see flaws. The largest capacity is needed for true criticism.

EXAMPLES. (1) Christ gives two examples in Luke 13: 1–4, where those who saw men slain by a falling tower, or Pilate's sword, immediately judged them to be worse than others. (2) Paul, in Rom. 14: 1–13, shows how men judged others when they saw them eating food or keeping the Sabbath in a different way from themselves; and, in 1 Cor. 8, gives another example in regard to things offered to idols.[1]

That ye be not judged. Condemned and censured, and misunderstood by others, as they have been by you.

2. **For with what judgment, etc.** The simple fact is stated, that if you are harsh and censorious, you invite others to be censorious toward you, and they will be sure to accept your invitation.

(1.) Men will naturally return the same kind of judgment which you give to them. Harsh and unkind judgment and severe criticism awaken the same in others, and make the judge peculiarly open to censure. It is a moral echo.

(2.) God will give just judgment upon such men, just as he does to those who refuse to forgive, because they are unforgivable. The habit of criticising to find fault, of censuring others, cultivates a very bad character in the one who has it. It makes him blind to his own faults; it cher-

[1] Capital illustrations are given by Mr. Ruskin in his preface to vol. iii. (Part IV.) of *Modern Painters;* and by May Ellen Atkinson in her *Poems*, "The Architect of Cologne." See, also, Jacox's *Secular Annotations*, vol. i. p. 208, "Judge Not;" Arthur Helps' *Friends in Council*, vol. i., series 2, p. 149, "Criticism."

3 And why beholdest thou the mote that is in thy brother's eye, but *y* considerest not the beam that is in thine own eye?

4 Or how wilt thou say to thy brother, Let me pull cast out the mote out of thine eye; and behold, a lo, the beam is is in thine own eye?

5 Thou hypocrite, first cast out first the beam out of thine own eye; and then shalt thou see clearly to cast out the mote out of thy brother's eye.

6 *z* Give not that which is holy unto *a* the dogs, neither cast ye your *b* pearls before the swine, lest haply they trample them under their feet, and turn again and rend you.

y Cp. John 8. 7–9. *z* ch. 15. 26. Cp. Prov. 9. 7, 8 & 23. 9. *a* Cp. Phil. 3. 2 & Rev. 22. 15. *b* ch. 13. 46.

ishes the pharisaical spirit; it makes him live in a bad atmosphere of faultfinding that deteriorates his own character; it makes him unlovely and unheavenly. Hence such a person must be severely condemned by a just judge.

With what measure ye mete, measure, **it shall be measured to you again.** This is another statement of the same law of retribution. The tendency to judge others grows sometimes out of differences of character. We look at others from our standpoint; the logical misjudges the enthusiast, and the enthusiast, the logical; and so throughout the virtues.[1]

Illustrated by the Mote and the Beam, vers. 3–5.

The inconsistency and folly of judging are shown by the illustration in these verses. It is one of the dangers to which new converts are specially exposed, in their sincere desire to do good and reform the church and the world.

3. **Why beholdest.** *Starest at* from without, *gazest at, examinest carefully:* **Thou**, who art judging others. **The mote.** "The word 'mote' suggests *dust;* whereas the figure is that of a minute *chip* or *splinter* of the same material with the *beam*."[2] **That is in thy brother's eye,** obscuring his vision. **But considerest not.** "Apprehendest not" from within, "understandest" not. **The beam that is in thine own eye.** *Beam*, a graphic and almost droll representation of a comparatively great fault. The word means a *log*, *joist*, or *rafter*. The Saviour draws a picture, and shows how morally grotesque the conduct of the faultfinder is.

> "Their own defects, invisible to them,
> Seen in another, they at once condemn,
> And tho' self-idolized in every case,
> Hate their own likeness in a brother's face."[3]

> "O wad some power the giftie gie us
> To see oursels as ithers see us!
> It wad frae monie a blunder free us
> And foolish notion."[4]

4. **Or how wilt thou say to thy brother,** etc. How can you have the face to say, How be guilty of such hypocrisy, such absurdity? "The gift of removing motes from other men's eyes seems to me as rare as that combination of qualities which makes a surgeon a skilful operator."[5] As, for instance, in the supreme operation of the oculist, the removal of a cataract.

5. **Thou hypocrite.** Because he professes to be sorry for the faults he reproves, when he is not, or he would hate them in himself. He rejoices to see a sin in his brother to find fault with. He would appear to be good by condemning the faults of others, while he is not really good, for he overlooks greater faults in himself.

Bright Sayings. (1) "Ten thousand of the greatest faults in our neighbors are of less consequence to *us* than one of the smallest in ourselves."[6] (2) "To pardon those absurdities in ourselves which we cannot suffer in others is neither better nor worse than to be more willing to be fools ourselves than to have others so."[7]

See clearly to cast out, etc. (1) Because he has had experience in getting rid of faults. (2) His vision will not be distorted by his own love of sin. This implies that we are to help our brother overcome his faults, but only in the right spirit and at the right time; and only when we are still more earnestly trying to overcome our own faults.

Pearls before Swine. A Warning, ver. 6.

While you must not condemn others, you must keep your eyes open, and distinguish between lambs and dogs, between children and swine, so far as to guide your actions in regard to them. "Two classes of opposers are mentioned: the dogs, representing the unclean, debased; and the swine, like wild boars, the fierce and bitter opponents."[8]

6. **Give not that which is holy.** The sacri-

[1] See Holmes' *Autocrat of the Breakfast-table*, on the three Johns and the three Thomases. So, also, the "Journey of the Virtues" in Bulwer's *Pilgrims of the Rhine*.
[2] Prof. M. R. Vincent. [3] Cowper. [4] Burns.
[5] R. W. Dale, D. D. [6] Arbp. Whately.
[7] Dean Swift. Jacox's *Secular Annotations*, i. 187, and his *Scripture Proverbs*, p. 531, give many illustrations from literature.
[8] Arbp. Trench.

7 [c] Ask, [d] and it shall be given you; [e] seek, and ye shall find; [f] knock, and it shall be opened unto you:

8 For every one that asketh receiveth; and he that seeketh findeth; and to him that knocketh it shall be opened.

c For ver. 7–11, see Luke 11. 9–13. *d* ch. 18. 19 & 21. 22. Mark 11. 24. John 14. 13 & 15. 7, 16 & 16. 23, 24. James 1. 5, 6, 17. 1 John 3. 22 & 5. 14, 15. *e* 1 Chr. 28. 9. 2 Chr. 15. 2. Prov. 8. 17. Jer. 29. 13. Cp. Isai. 55. 6. *f* Cp. Rev. 3. 20.

ficial meats, the holy things prepared for the temple services, to aid men in the worship of God. **Unto the dogs.** "In the East dogs are savage, unclean ceremonially, and actually filthy and horrible in appearance. They are the scavengers of the cities, and feed upon all the refuse, even when it is far gone in putrefaction. To cast the sacrificed flesh to the dogs would be first putting it on a level with the offal of the shambles, or with that which is cast out as abominable filth, and then giving it over to the charge of abominable beasts."[1] To give holy things to dogs will not elevate the dogs, but only defile the holy things. **Neither cast ye your pearls before swine.** Because they cannot appreciate their beauty nor understand their value, and you lose your pearls. You must change the nature of the swine before the pearls will do them any good.[2] **Lest they . . . turn again and rend you.** You not only will fail of doing them any good, but they will injure you for making the attempt.

EXAMPLES. The advice in Prov. 9: 7, 8, "Reprove not a scorner, lest he hate thee." Christ changing his method of teaching and speaking in parables because of the opposition of the Jews (Matt. 13: 10–17). Paul turning from the Jews to the Gentiles (Acts 13: 45, 46).

APPLICATIONS. There are those who will only make a misuse of the highest and holiest things in religion. Their natures are so sensual, their hearts so hard, that they cannot understand or appreciate the best things of God. Men often love to argue on religion, and even read the Bible, not that they may get any good, but find some new perversion or false argument against the truth. In many cases it is wise *not to argue* with settled errorists. It does not follow that we are to do nothing for them. There are some things even they can understand, — sympathy, loving-kindness, aid in temporal things, the love of Jesus Christ. By these we are to seek to change them into sincere men and Christians, and then they will understand the holy things and appreciate the pearls.

VIII. PRAYER. — THE MEANS OF GAINING AND SUSTAINING THE NEW LIFE, vers. 7–11.

Prayer is the door to the divine treasure house which contains supplies for all our needs. The living according to the principles set forth in the Sermon on the Mount is so difficult an attainment, and bringing the whole world to obey them is so colossal an undertaking, that without continual connection with Heaven, and supplies of grace and power from Heaven, the achievement would be impossible. Hence, the way and the promise of these verses. See, also, on 6 : 5–13, and 21 : 21, 22.

FIRST, THE THREEFOLD WAY OF OBTAINING. 7. **Ask, . . . seek, . . . knock.** These words imply three methods of prayer, and perhaps three degrees of intensity. *Ask*, express your desire, go to God with it, including and gathering up in itself the "seek" and the "knock," as in ver. 11, for these are modes of asking. *Seek* by all active efforts, which are acted prayers; use all possible means, as in the parable of the pearl of great price. *Knock* at the door of God's treasure house of blessings for the blessings which no seeking can obtain, but which must be given by God.

SECOND, THE THREEFOLD PROMISE OF AN ANSWER. 8. **For every one that asketh receiveth.** There is no exception. True asking will combine seeking and knocking. The answer will be given according to the kind of asking. **And** every one **that seeketh findeth.** Most of the best things must be sought for, as the graces, education, character. For others, as the gift of the Spirit, special providences, divine guidance, God's tender love, opportunities, revelations, we must knock at God's treasury door, **and to him that knocketh it shall be opened.**

There are three ways in which prayer is answered: —

(1.) The very act of praying brings us into communion with God, which is the best answer to prayer. The giving and receiving are the means of becoming acquainted with God.[3] But this

[1] Prof. Isaac H. Hall.

[2] Shakespeare's *Tempest*, where Prospero felt that the jewel of kindness was thrown away on the brutish Caliban: —

"Abhorred slave;
Which any print of goodness will not take,
Being capable of all ill."

[3] See Trench's *Poems*, "The Suppliant."

9 Or what man is there of you, whom (who,) if his son (shall) ask him for (bread,) a loaf, will he give him *g* a stone?

10 Or (or) if he (shall) ask for a fish, will he give him a serpent?

11 If ye then, *h* being evil, know how to give good gifts unto your children, how much more shall *d* your Father which is in heaven give good things to them that ask him?

d See on ver. 7. *g* ch. 4. 3. *h* ch. 12. 34. Gen. 6. 5 & 8. 21.

cannot be without other and direct answers. There is, therefore,

(2.) A giving of the exact thing asked for, whenever it is wisest and best.

(3.) Since the exact thing we ask for, in the form we ask for it, would often be the worst thing for us, and what we really do *not* desire, therefore, in such cases God gives us the *spirit* of our prayer, what we really want, what we would have asked for in form if we had known all things as God does. A child cries for the moon. He does not really want the moon, as he thinks he does, but only some bright plaything, which the parent gives, and thus answers his real prayer, while to have given the moon would not only have not answered his prayer, but would have killed him. We ask for poison, thinking we are asking for honey; we ask for apples of Sodom, imagining them to be fruits of Paradise. God answers by giving the honey and the fruits of Paradise.

> "We, ignorant of ourselves,
> Beg often our own harms, which the wise gods
> Deny us for our good; so find we profit
> By losing of our prayers." [1]

True prayer is always answered, but that is not true prayer which puts the temporal before the spiritual, that would rather have some gift than to be good and to do good, "as it is in heaven." Hence God gives, as we should give to him that asks us, that which is wisest and best. It is right and good to ask for temporal blessings. This asking gives us lessons in prayer. But it should always be with the added clause, "Not my will but thine be done."

> "An answer, not that you long for,
> But diviner, will come one day;
> Your eyes are too dim to see it,
> Yet strive, and wait, and pray."

Compare Christ's prayer that the cup of suffering might pass from him, and Paul's prayer that the thorn in his flesh might be removed.

A Proof from Each Parent's Experience. **9. If his son ask bread** (a loaf), **will he give him a stone**, which was often found in the shape of their small, flat, round loaf. Dr. Trumbull says that having obtained one of the hard balls of bread at the convent of St. Catherine on Mt. Sinai, for a paperweight, he accidentally threw it away by mistake, thinking it to be a stone.[2] See on 4 : 3.

10. **If he ask a fish, will he give him a serpent?** Which resembles some forms of fish. Here the substitute spoken of is not merely useless, but hurtful. On the contrary if the child ask for a stone or serpent, — anything injurious, — the father will give him good food instead. It is the world and Satan that give stones for bread and serpents for fish.

11. **If ye then, being evil**, imperfect, with more or less selfishness mingled with all you do, **give good gifts unto your children.** The parent that does not do this is a rare monster, probably does not exist. **How much more.** The difference is infinite. **Shall your Father which is in heaven.** The holy, heavenly, loving, perfect Father, who makes heaven what it is, who is able to answer every prayer, who loves his children, and desires for them every good that is possible.

Give good things, whatever they ask that is good for them. He is too wise and good to give harmful things even when asked for. Luke (11 : 13) names the Holy Spirit as the "good things." For he is not only the best of all good gifts, but the sum and source of all. It is like giving life to the dead, making possible to him all enjoyments and all powers. It is like giving light to those in the dark, or sight to the blind, revealing all the glories of earth and sky. The good Father, who gives this best of all gifts, will not withhold any of the lesser good things.

Thus the Argument is complete. Our love for our children shows us a dim image of God's love for his children. We know that our Father will answer prayer, and we learn how he will answer, and why we must ask.

To them that ask him. Why must we ask for them? God gives many things whether we ask for them or not (5 : 45), because he loves to pour out his love, and would prove to us that he is ready and willing to give. But the best things, and the best blessings of those given to good and

[1] Shakespeare. See the poem *Strive, yet I do not promise.* J. R. Miller's *Silent Times*, p. 73, "The Blessing of Not Getting." *The Choir Invisible*, p. 257, on The Blessings of Defeat.

[2] *Studies in Oriental Social Life.*

12 *i* Therefore all things / All things therefore whatsoever ye would that men should do unto you, even so do ye even so to / also unto them: for this is *j* the law and the prophets.

13 *k* Enter ye in at / by the strait / narrow gate: for wide is / is the gate, and broad is / is the way, that leadeth to destruction, and many there be which go / be they that enter in thereat: / thereby.

i Luke 6. 31. Cp. Tobit 4. 15. *j* See ch. 22. 40. *k* Luke 13. 24.

bad alike, can be received only by those who care for them enough to ask for them. Books, libraries, schools, churches, the Holy Spirit, communion with God, a higher life, a nobler character, cannot be given to people who care for none of these things until they are desired and sought for.

IX. THE GOLDEN RULE.

12. **Therefore.** Because what follows is the summing up of all the previous precepts in this discourse, as love is the sum of the Ten Commandments, which James (2 : 8) calls the Royal Law, as this verse is called the Golden Rule. Because, also, you are children of God, and therefore should act like your Father; and if children of the same Father, you are brothers, and should act like brothers. **All things whatsoever ye would that men should do to you.** All that you would have a right to expect from others, not everything criminal or foolish that some one might desire. All that is fair and proper. **Do ye even so to them.** Equivalent to "Love thy neighbor as thyself." "The rule does not require us to do *the things* which they ask, but to act toward them in the manner and spirit in which we should wish them to act toward us. This rule works in two ways: while directly it requires us to act toward others as we should wish them to act toward us, in spirit and implication it requires us to wish from others no more than we should be willing to render to them if our positions were reversed." [1] It is easy to see by examples what the rule means. A tramp wants you to give him your house; a lazy man wants you to turn all your property over to him; a criminal wishes the judge to let him go free; a child wishes his father to cease restraining him. These things clearly are not to be given. But we should do what would be fair, wise, and best to have done to us in the same circumstances.

For this is the law and the prophets. It is the sum of the duties to man required by the law and taught by the prophets (Matt. 22 : 40). It implies the state of the heart and life which it was their purpose to produce.

This is not a new rule. It is found even in heathen writers, especially in a negative form, — as Confucius, Aristotle, Socrates, Seneca. It existed in the Old Testament long before Christ. See Lev. 19 : 18. But "Christ, so far from propounding the Golden Rule as a novelty, affirms it to be the *essence* of the *Law* and the *Prophets*. It is, in fact, the *primitive command* of God in the *hearts of all nations*." [2] What Jesus did was to bring it out in clearer light, in a positive form, with new authority, with a universal application, and with the power that enables men to live according to it. The Golden Rule had been covered up, like the pictures by Giotto in the church of Santa Croce in Florence, for ages, and then rediscovered and brought to light.

"Only the Golden Rule can bring the Golden Age." [3] "The Golden Rule is the golden key to the Golden Age." This rule obeyed will settle all the difficult social questions of the world.

X. AN EXHORTATION TO ENTER THE NEW LIFE, vers. 13, 14.

The practical precepts culminated in the Golden Rule. But still there were some things needed to complete the sermon. The duty was very clear; the next thing was to persuade men to enter into the kingdom with its new life and spirit.

13. **Enter ye in** to the kingdom of heaven, eternal life, the Christian life. In Luke (13 : 24) they are urged to strive, to agonize like an athlete with his whole nature, to enter in. **At,** or by, **the strait gate.** The narrow, difficult gate. *Strait* here is a different word from "straight," and is still used in such expressions as "He is in a strait," *i. e.*, a narrow place; or "the Straits (the narrows) of Gibraltar." "Some of the city gates contain, in one of their folds, a small door, which is left open an hour or more after sunset. This little door is still more common in the gates of the bazaars. We like to look at those curious little doors, and imagine that when our Lord had uttered these memorable words he had in mind these two gates, — the one wide, easy, and traversed by the multitude in broad daylight; the other, narrow, high in the step, to be found in the dark, and sought amid danger by a few anxious travellers." [4]

For wide is the gate, and broad is the way, that leadeth to destruction. There are a multitude of sins, each of which is a way to ruin. *To destruction.* The end of sin is destruction. It destroys life, health, happiness, hope, heaven. The destruction often begins in this world; it is completed in the next. **And many there be which go in thereat.** It was the popular way,

[1] Abbott. [2] Van Doren. [3] Frances Willard. [4] Van Lennep.

14 Because strait *is* For narrow is the gate, and narrow *is* straitened / the way, which that leadeth unto life, and *m* few there be be they that find it.

15 ¶ *n* Beware of false prophets, which come to you in sheep's clothing, but inwardly they are *o* ravening wolves.

16 *p* Ye shall know them by their fruits. By their fruits ye shall know them. Do men *men* gather grapes of thorns, or figs of thistles?

l Ps. 16. 11. Cp. ch. 18. 8 & John 14. 6. *m* Cp. Luke 13. 23. *n* ch. 24. 11, 24. Deut. 13. 1–3. Jer. 14. 14 & 23. 16. Mark 13. 22. Luke 6. 26. Acts 13. 6. 2 Pet. 2. 1. 1 John 4. 1. Rev. 19. 20, *al.* *o* Ezek. 22. 27. Acts 20. 29. Cp. Mic. 3. 5 & John 10. 12. *p* Luke 6. 43, 44. James 2. 18.

and thronged with travellers. It was so then. It still is to-day, but in a less degree.

14. **Strait is the gate, and narrow is the way** (τεθλιμμένη), *compressed, pinched, straitened*, . . . **which leadeth** (ἀπάγουσα), *leadeth away from* destruction, **unto life**, the true life, the life of heaven on earth, eternal life.[1] **Few there be that find it.** A fact at the time. He does not say it will always be so, he does not say it *must* be so. The parables of the leaven and of the mustard seed, and the numbers given in Revelation, imply that it will not always be so. The picture is that of two cities: one the New Jerusalem, the City of God; the other the City of Destruction, such as Bunyan describes. The choice as to which we shall enter is before every one of us.

Why the Gate and the Way to Good is Narrow. (1) Note that Jesus did not *make* the way narrow; he only *stated the fact*, and used it as a motive. (2) The gate is as wide as the love of God can make it. A gate is made to enter by, not to keep men out. It is a standing invitation to enter. In Revelation the city of God is pictured with twelve gates, four on each side, to express the wide welcome from every direction, for every race and condition. They are never shut, but each one of these gates is so narrow that "there shall in no wise enter into it anything that defileth, neither whatsoever worketh abomination, or maketh a lie: but they which are written in the Lamb's book of life" (Rev. 21: 27). And they must be so, or the city would not be the city of God. For (3) the narrowness of the gate is a necessary fact. The gate to every best good must be narrow; as the gate to knowledge, to success, to wisdom, to courage, to culture. There is one direction to the north star, and a million directions away from it. One would like to join the choir, but the gate is narrow. No one can really enter it without learning to sing, no matter how many other things he may do. There is one right, and a thousand wrong ways. There is one way to be a Christian, and many ways to go astray. A wider way to heaven means a poorer heaven, a wider way to virtue means a weaker virtue.

XI. TESTS FOR OURSELVES AND OTHERS, vers. 15–27.

First. The Test of Good Fruit. 15. **Beware of false prophets.** A prophet is one who speaks under divine influence, a revealer and interpreter of God's will, an authoritative religious instructor, whether speaking of the past, the present, or the future. A false prophet was therefore one who pretended to speak God's truth, when he did not, one who spoke falsehood in God's name. **Come to you in sheep's clothing**, hidden under the fleece of a sheep, so as to look like a sheep, as in Æsop's fable. They claimed to belong to God's flock. They put on the appearance of a prophet or teacher. They held that position.

But inwardly they are ravening wolves. Ravening (ἅρπαγες), those who snatch away by force, like the Harpies in Virgil, whose name comes from this word. They hunger greedily after the sheep to destroy and not to feed.[2] "The hypocrite is a *goat* in sheep's clothing, but the false prophet is a *wolf* in sheep's clothing."[3]

16. **Ye shall know them by their fruits.** The Greek for *know* denotes full knowledge, a decisive test. In time their real nature will appear in their acts. The wolf in sheep's clothing cannot always act like a sheep. This is the infallible test, like Ithuriel's spear in Milton's *Paradise Lost*. In the Parliament of Religions the theories of religion were presented, but the real test of their value would have been in bringing together the people made by the religion, the practical results. When some one said to Wendell Phillips that Hinduism was as good as Christianity, he replied, "India is the answer."

[1] The Wicket Gate in *Pilgrim's Progress*, and the many ways in which Christian had to strive in order to enter. *Scripture Emblems*, with the picture of the man with huge bundles of sin on his back, trying to go through a narrow door.

[2] See in Ruskin's *Sesame and Lilies*, his interpretation of "Blind Mouths" in Milton's *Comus*. Tennyson's *Sea Dreams* gives a picture of a false prophet. So does Moore's *Lalla Rookh* in his description of the Veiled Prophet of Khorassan. See, also, Prof. Drummond's *Tropical Africa;* the chapter on "Mimicry, the Ways of African Insects."

[3] Broadus.

17 Even so [q] every good tree bringeth forth good fruit; but [a] the corrupt tree bringeth forth evil fruit.

18 A good tree cannot bring forth evil fruit, neither [can] can a corrupt tree bring forth good fruit.

19 [r] Every tree that bringeth not forth good fruit is hewn down, and cast into the fire.

20 Wherefore Therefore [p] by their fruits ye shall know them.

21 ¶ [s] Not every one that [t] saith unto me, Lord, Lord, shall [u] enter into the kingdom of heaven; but he that [v] doeth the will of my Father which is in heaven.

22 [w] Many will say to me [x] in that day, Lord, Lord, [have] did we not [y] prophesied in prophesy by thy name? and [z] in by thy name [have] cast out devils? and [in] by thy name [done] do many [wonderful] mighty works?

p See on ver. 16. *q* ch. 12. 33–35. *r* See ch. 3. 10. *s* Luke 6. 46. Rom. 2. 13. James 1. 22. *t* Cp. Hos. 8. 2. *u* Cp. John 3. 3, 5. *v* ch. 12. 50. *w* ch. 25. 11, 12. Luke 13. 25–27. *x* Mal. 3. 17, 18. *y* Cp. Num. 24. 4 & John 11. 51 & 1 Cor. 13. 2. *z* See Mark 9. 38.

Individuals are often better or worse than their teachings for a time. But a community may be tested by the results of its religion.

Do men gather grapes of thorns. The Beatitudes, the fruits of the Spirit, from bad hearts and bad principles.

17. **Every good tree bringeth forth good fruit**, fruit according to its nature. This is not only the test, but also shows us how to obtain good fruit, as in Luke (6: 43). If you want good fruit, see that you have a good tree, or graft good wood on the old tree. **Corrupt**, decayed, unhealthy, of bad nature. **Evil fruit.** "Of the several words in the New Testament denoting evil, this emphasizes *evil in its activity.*" [1] "As to the good tree and the corrupt tree, there is a wild olive and a wild orange, and also a wild tree to represent almost every one of the good fruit trees of Palestine. If grafted when young, a good tree will result; but if by mistake or ignorance one is left to the fruiting time before being found out, it has to suffer the axe, and most welcome is it to the fire in a country where good fuel is scarce." [2]

Note that there is a difference in time as to when the fruit appears. In some trees it appears early in life, in others after long years. Moreover the green fruit is very different from the same when ripe. It is the same with moral fruits. We must wait until they are ripe before we can fully judge. It sometimes takes years before we see the results of certain teachings. Most good people are like grafted trees, where some branches are not grafted, and it takes time to get rid of them. We must distinguish between the fruit on the new graft and that which grows out of the old nature.

18. This verse states the same fact in a negative form, to emphasize this truth.

19. **Every tree that bringeth not forth good fruit**, whether it is entirely barren, or bears bad fruit, **is hewn down, and cast into the fire.** It is not allowed to take the place of good trees; its only use is to be burned for fuel; its end is complete destruction. This is especially true in Palestine, where trees are taxed, and no one can afford to keep in his orchard a fruitless tree. Fire is used as a symbol of utter destruction. What else can be done with bad people who refuse to bear good fruit, after God has exhausted every influence to make them good? They are fit only to be a warning to others.

SECOND. THE TEST OF DEEDS NOT PROFESSIONS.

21. **Not every one that saith unto me, Lord, Lord**, professing to be his followers and obedient servants **shall enter into the kingdom of heaven.** God's real spiritual kingdom, where Christ rules in the heart, perfected and completed in heaven. False pretences are of no avail there. **But he that doeth the will of my Father.** He that obeys God, and does what God wills. Profession is good (ch. 10: 32), but he that has only profession is no Christian. Leaves are necessary to the growth of a tree, but a fruit tree that has only leaves is not a good tree.

22. **Many will say to me in that day**, the day of Judgment (ch. 25), **Have we not prophesied in thy name**, taught as with his authority, **and in thy name have cast out devils**, demons, the invisible opponents of Christ. They posed as his friends, fighting on his side; but they cast out some demons that they might retain others, or did it merely as a blind, in order to gain influence for their evil works. **Done many wonderful works.** The Greek word translated "wonderful

[1] Prof. M. R. Vincent, *Word Studies.*

[2] Prof. Isaac H. Hall, *Sunday School Times.*

23 [w] And then will I profess unto them, I [a] never knew you: [b] depart from me, [c] ye that work iniquity.

24 ¶ [d] Whosoever therefore heareth these sayings of mine, and doeth them, I will liken him unto a [c] wise man, which built his house upon a rock:

25 And the rain descended, and the floods came, and the winds blew, and beat upon that house; and it fell not: for it was founded upon a rock.

26 And every one that heareth these sayings of mine, and doeth them not, shall be likened unto [c] a foolish man, which built his house upon the sand:

w See on ver. 22. *a* ch. 10. 33. Cp. Ps. 101. 4. *b* ch. 25. 41. Ps. 6. 8. *c* ch. 13. 41. Ps. 5. 5. *d* For ver. 24–27, see Luke 6. 47–49. *e* ch. 25. 2. Cp. Ezek. 13. 10–14.

works" (δυνάμεις) is sometimes translated "miracles," and means *powers*, or works that require great power to perform.

23. **Then will I profess**, openly, publicly declare, as the sentence of a judge, **I never knew you.** "Never" here is a strong word, nearly equivalent to our "*never, never.*" **Knew you** as a disciple or follower. This is simply a statement of fact. He makes public what had been true all the time, but not known. He now makes it known in order to reveal the true nature of righteousness, and to exonerate the kingdom of God from any complicity with evil. So it was with Judas. **Depart from me**, in place and appearance, since you are really far from me in character and life. Persons of your character have part in my home, my heaven, my labors for salvation. A man may have a bad character and yet do many very good deeds, as a stream flowing in a certain direction may have eddies that flow in another, without changing the direction of the stream. Mr. Ruskin in the preface to his third volume, speaking in answer to some of his critics, says that "it is perfectly possible to protect one's self against small errors, and yet to make great and final error in the sum of work: on the other hand it is equally possible to fall into many small errors, and yet be right in tendency all the while, and entirely right in the end. In this respect, some men may be compared to careful travellers, who neither stumble at stones nor slip in sloughs, but have from the beginning of their journey to its close chosen the wrong road; and others to those who, however, slipping, stumbling, at the wayside, have yet their eyes fixed on the true gate and goal, and will not fail of reaching them." [1]

THIRD. THE TRUTH ENFORCED BY AN ILLUSTRATION, vers. 24–27.

24. **Therefore**, in view of the facts above stated, **whosoever heareth these sayings of mine.** "Both classes of men hear the word. So far they are alike. In like manner the two houses have externally the same appearance." [2] **And doeth them.** Thus making them a part of his character, the rock foundation of his life. He is good in fact as well as in name. **A wise man, which built his house.** "*The house* is the general fabric of an outwardly religious life." [3] The house contains a man's expectations of happiness, his prosperity, his success, his whole future, all that into which he puts his labors, his love, his time, his hopes. **Upon a rock**, rather, the rock, the great underlying bed rock, which no storms can affect or remove. His character is such, built upon the Rock of Ages, that no outward influences can destroy it, or take it away. By doing what he learns, it becomes a part of himself.

25. **The rain descended, . . . floods . . . winds.** These represent persecutions, temptations, evil influences, bad companions, worldly pleasures, appetites and passions, all Satan's weapons of attack. These come like a storm, a hurricane, a flood, a torrent. **It fell not: for it was founded upon a** (the) **rock**, Christ Jesus, and the character he implants. "At this very day the mode of building in Christ's own town of Nazareth suggests the source of this image. Dr. Robinson was entertained in the house of a Greek Arab. The house had just been built. In order to lay the foundations he had dug down to the solid rock, as is usual throughout the country here, to the depth of thirty feet, and then built up arches." [4]

"The best Eastern illustration of the building upon the rock and upon the sand is to be derived from the character of the wadies in Palestine and the neighboring countries. In dry weather they are either quite dry or only supplied with a trickling streamlet. But when the heavy rains come, not only does a deep river tear down the wady, but as the Arabs of Sinai say, 'It is not a river, it is the sea.' Nothing can stand against these floods. Trees are uprooted, huge rocks carried along, and the luckless party of travellers are swept utterly away."

26. **Every one that heareth . . . and doeth them not**, forgets them, or lets them remain in his memory as a mere theory, apart from life.

[1] Modern Painters. [2] Cambridge Bible. [3] Ellicott. [4] Kitto.

27 And the rain descended, and the floods came, and the winds blew, and beat upon that house; and it fell: and great was the fall of it thereof.
28 And it came to pass, when Jē'sus had ended these sayings, *f* the people were astonished at his doctrine:
29 *g* For he taught them as *one* having authority, and not as their scribes.

f ch. 13. 54 & 22. 33. Mark 1. 22 & 6. 2 & 11. 18. Luke 4. 32. Cp. Acts 13. 12. *g* John 7. 46.

Foolish man, which built his house upon the sand, at the bottom of the ravine or on the seashore.

27. **Rain . . . floods . . . winds . . . beat upon that house,** as on the other.

"The sands, however, are often made quicksands by the force of water; and that which is a passable road in the dry season would swallow up a horseman in the wet season. In crossing the sandy mouth of a stream by the seashore in those countries, the traveller has always to look out for quicksands. Sometimes, too, the dry approach of wind and sand swallows up a house. Thus the comparison in our lesson suggests many dangers in the East to which a house is scarcely ever liable in our country." [1]

The sands represent the surface feelings and emotions and the beliefs of the mind, which are not deep enough to change the heart; the selfish desires, the love of praise, conformity to custom, policy, which often lead to certain kinds of good works, but are not wrought into character.

28. **Were astonished** (ἐξεπλήσσοντο, from ἐκ, *out of*, and πλήσσω, *to strike*). Hence, *to expel by a blow, to drive away*, especially, *to strike one out of self-possession, to strike with a panic, to strike with astonishment* or *wonder;* like our word *amaze*, to throw into a *maze* or labyrinth. The novelty and force of Jesus' teaching struck their minds as with the shock of a sudden blow. **Doctrine,** teaching, including both what was taught and the manner of teaching.

29. **For he taught them as one having authority.** (1) Not as an expounder of others' opinions. His teaching was fresh, independent, and original. (2) He spoke with the authority of one who *knows*. He knew the way to heaven, for he had been there; he knew the principles of the kingdom of God, for he was God; and he spoke, therefore, with the authority of an expert. It is just this speaking with authority and not by inferences and guesses and hopes, that the soul needs and that distinguishes Christ's religion from all others. (3) What he said was unalloyed truth, and therefore came with the authority of truth to the souls of men, — the one made for the other by the Creator of both. (4) His conduct and character gave Jesus great personal power in his teaching. The teacher will speak with authority just in so far as the truth is *a part of his own being*, and has been made real in the workshop of his own experience. (5) He spoke with the authority of the Son of God, an ambassador from heaven, delivering a message from his heavenly Father to the children of men. It is one thing to speak as an individual, and quite another to speak as the authorized representative of a great government whose whole power lies back of the message.

NOTE that all good teaching and preaching must have something of this quality of authority which characterized the teaching of Jesus. It must be the fruit of experience and knowledge. Those who know God, who abide in Christ, who have had a deep experience of his love, who know best the inner workings of their own souls, who have fought battles with sin and temptation, and have gained the victory, who have had foretastes of heaven, — these can teach and preach with the most authority and power. **And not as the scribes,** who were mere interpreters; who dwelt on forms, incidentals and details, and not on principles; who argued and quoted, but did not know; who continually appealed to the authority of others.

SECTION VIII. CHAPTERS 8, 9.

A GROUP OF MIRACLES.

In these two chapters Matthew has grouped together ten miracles treated in detail, and two general descriptions of the varied miraculous works of Jesus, without special regard to their chronological order, but for a logical purpose. They naturally follow the Sermon on the Mount; for, —

1. They prove the authority of Jesus for his teaching, showing that he is the accredited messenger from God.

2. They illustrate with object lessons the spirit and the work of the Gospel, the principles of which he had been teaching.

3. They illustrate the wide range of the power of Jesus over nature, diseases of all kinds, evil spirits, and all the ills of body and spirit; so that he can be the Saviour of all men, under all circumstances.

[1] *Sunday-School Times.*

CHAPTER 8.

Five Miracles, and a Summary of Many Others.

Section VIII. — A GROUP OF MIRACLES, PROVING JESUS' AUTHORITY AND ILLUSTRATING HIS TEACHINGS.

1. A Case of Leprosy, vers. 2–4.
2. A Case of Palsy; the Centurion's Servant, vers. 5–13.
3. A Case of Fever; Peter's Wife's Mother, vers. 14, 15.
4. A Summary of Miraculous Works; Great Multitudes, vers. 16, 17.
5. Stilling the Tempest, and Associated Incidents, vers. 18–27.
6. Evil Spirits cast out; the Gadarene Demoniac, vers. 28–34.

Time.	*Place in the Life of Christ.*
Midsummer of A. D. 28.	About the middle of his ministry.
Place.	*John the Baptist.*
Galilee, near Capernaum and the Sea of Galilee.	In prison at Castle Machærus.

1 When And when he was come down from the mountain, [h] great multitudes followed him.

2 [i] And behold, there came to him a leper and [j] worshipped him, saying, Lord, if thou wilt, thou canst make me clean.

h ch. 4. 25. *i* For vers. 2–4, see Mark 1. 40–44 & Luke 5. 12–14. *j* ch. 2. 2 & 9. 18 & 15. 25 & 20. 20, *al.* Cp. ch. 18. 26 & Acts 10. 25.

1. **When he** (Jesus) **was come down from the mountain**, where he had been teaching the people the Sermon on the Mount. **Great multitudes followed him**, attracted by his teachings and his kindly deeds. They were more or less closely attached to him, some following from curiosity, some with interest to learn more, some in heart and devotion as well as outward form. This verse really belongs at the close of the last chapter.

I. A CASE OF LEPROSY, vers. 2–4.

Time. May, A. D. 28, two months before the Sermon on the Mount.

Place. Galilee. Mark connects this miracle with the first circuit in Galilee, but with no mention of the place.

Parallels. Mark 1 : 40–45; Luke 5 : 12–15.

2. **And behold**, not connected with the previous verse, but introducing the story. **There came a leper**, to Jesus. The leper was conscious of his leprosy, and felt his lost condition. Lepers have no hope, and seldom ask medical aid, but only gifts of charity. The first step toward salvation from sin is to realize how sinful and guilty we are.

Going to Jesus for Help. Jesus' marvellous cures of others had awakened hope in the leper, and he went to him as the only possible source of health. What Jesus has done for others in saving them from sin encourages us to go to him for our own salvation.

The Leprosy.[1] Distinguish between the leprosy of the Pentateuch, the white leprosy, which was many centuries before Christ, and the modern leprosy, the elephantiasis, so named because it gives the skin the rough appearance of an elephant's skin. Diseases change more or less in course of centuries. Here is a good illustration of how frequently different things go under the same name, and great controversies arise over them on this account. *Two Kinds of Leprosy.*

This disease is nothing short of a foul decay, arising from the total corruption of the blood. It was a living death, as indicated by bare head, rent clothes, and covered *Description.*

[1] On leprosy, see *Land and Book*, new edition, i. 529–535. The vivid description of the healing of the leper in *Ben-Hur*. G. W. Cable's *Old Creole Days*, "Jean Poquelin" has a graphic account of leprosy and its effects. Willis' *Poems*, "The Leper." There is a very affecting and instructive story, "The Lepers, a story of South Africa," by William Charles Scully, in *Scribner's Magazine*. *The Report of the Health Department of New York City* for 1896, by Dr. George H. Fox.

lip. In the Middle Ages, a man seized with leprosy was "clothed in a shroud, and the masses of the dead sung over him."[1] "This is an endemic, chronic, malignant, constitutional disease, characterized by alterations in the cutaneous, nerve, and bone structures, resulting in anæsthesia, necrosis, general atrophy, and deformity."[2] Dr. Thomson, in describing the village of lepers near the Jaffa gate of Jerusalem, says, "I was both surprised and startled on approaching the Holy City, in 1833, by the sudden apparition of a crowd of beggars 'sans eyes, sans nose, sans hair, sans everything.' They held up toward me their handless arms; unearthly sounds gurgled through throats without palates." Their hovels were "dens of corruption and death." "The disease, like the anthropophagous ghouls of the Arabs, leisurely eats up its victims in one long remorseless meal." "The hair falls from the head and eyebrows; the nails loosen and decay, and drop off; joint after joint of finger and toe shrink up, and slowly fall away; the gums are absorbed, and the teeth disappear; the nose, the eyes, the tongue, and the palate are slowly consumed; and finally the wretched victim sinks into the earth and disappears."[3] "From the skin it slowly ate its way through the tissues, to the bones and joints, and even to the marrow, rotting the whole body piecemeal. The lungs, the organs of speech and hearing, and the eyes, were attacked in turn, till at last consumption or dropsy brought welcome death."[4]

THE LEPROSY AS A TYPE OF SIN. Sin is the most awful thing that ever afflicted humanity. No pen or picture can portray its horrors or the devastation it has wrought.

Unclean Defiling. Sin, like leprosy, is the most loathsome, polluting, deforming, unclean thing in the universe. "Leprosy is God's language, by which he describes sin as it appears in his sight."

Hereditary. The tendency to sin, like the tendency to leprosy, is hereditary. The sins of the fathers are visited upon the children, but only to the third and fourth generation, while the good reaches to thousands of generations.

Constitutional. Sin, like leprosy, is constitutional. The outward expressions and manifestations are but the effects of a disease which permeates the whole system.

Latent Working. Sin, like leprosy, is deceitful in its workings. "Some, as they look on infancy, reject with horror the thought that sin exists within. But so might any one say who looked upon the beautiful babe in the arms of a leprous mother. But time brings forth the fearful malady. New-born babes of leprous parents are often as pretty and as healthy in appearance as any; but by and by its presence and workings become visible in some of the signs described in the thirteenth chapter of Leviticus."[5] "Of late years, most lepers possessed of means are able to secure such medical treatment as removes most of the external signs of the disease. Such persons are, however, all known to the board of health, and under its surveillance."[6] In many cases leprosy, like sin, does not bring immediate pain and death. Rev. Mr. Bishop says, "It is not virulent, acute, or even painful, *except in its later stages*, when the vital organs are obstructed in their action. It is an *anæsthetic* malady," so that but for its repulsiveness it would be allowed to go on without much anxiety till it involved the whole person.

Contagious. Sin, like leprosy, is in a sense contagious by intimate contact, as when the sin of others is received into the soul, by yielding to temptation, or following bad examples. Leprosy is not contagious like scarlet fever or smallpox, but it can "be communicated by the inoculation of the blood with the morbid secretions of an affected person." "Leprosy is no more dangerous than consumption. Persons in a street car are very much more likely to contract tuberculosis from the expectoration of a consumptive than to get leprosy from the presence of a leper."[7] "It is a well-established fact that when leprosy has once gained for itself a foothold in any locality, it is apt to remain there and spread. The case of the Sandwich Islands illustrates the danger. Forty years ago the disease did not exist there."[8] Rev. Sereno E. Bishop, of Honolulu, states another fact, which makes it a more exact type of sin. "The disease is substantially confined to the natives. Our experience here shows that there is little or no danger of infection from leprosy to persons of cleanly habits. The disease spreads among the natives because they do not fear it, but live in intimate contact with lepers, just as if they were not diseased." So there is little danger to those in a sinful world, who are pure in heart, and are laboring, as Christ did, for the salvation of men from sin.

Difficult to Cure. Leprosy is practically incurable by human skill, although under favorable circumstances there have been several cures, even in advanced stages, says Dr. Fox in his report to the New York Health Department (1896). "But that man (who was cured) was carefully treated in the hospital, and he re-

[1] Farrar.
[2] Arthur Van Harlingen, M. D., in *Holmes' Surgery.*
[3] Thomson, *Land and Book.* [4] Geikie. [5] Thomson.
[6] S. E. Bishop, D. D., in *Honolulu Friend.* Dr. C. H. Fox, in *Medical Record.*
[8] Dr. H. S. Piffard, in *Medical Record.*

3 And Jesus put forth his hand, and touched him, saying, I will; be thou made clean. And immediately his leprosy was cleansed.

ceived all the comforts of life, whereas, if he had been locked up in a lazaretto, and his food handed to him through a hole, probably he would have died. The great difficulty in curing leprosy is that as soon as a person learns that he has it he is made to believe that all hope is gone. He is treated as a doomed man and made to believe that he is an object to be shunned by everybody."[1] This is a good illustration of sin. Better surroundings and care are a great aid in the cure of sin. Christ attracted and helped sinners because he brought hope. The sinner is not a doomed man if he will go to the Good Physician and will keep away from evil.

Separating.

Sin, like leprosy, separates from the pure and clean. The sinner is utterly unfit for heaven and the society of pure and holy beings. One of the saddest things about the leprosy is this separation from the healthy and clean. (See *Ben-Hur*.) In the Sandwich Islands the lepers are all sent to one of the islands, called Molokai, by the Board of Health; but there is intense opposition to it by many of the natives, on account of the separation from family and friends. Again, Rev. S. E. Bishop, of Honolulu, says: "Lepers themselves appear to especially revolt against submitting to any distinction when at large, but seem inclined to push themselves upon their neighbors, and to resent their personal contact being shunned." How apt the type of sinners! Mr. Scully, who lives in South Africa, has written a touching tale of the lepers in that country. He writes me that the story is founded on fact. Most vividly he describes how awful was the separation of the lepers from all that they loved, so that one man led a company of lepers to a precipice to destroy himself and them by sudden death, rather than go into the leper colony.

Worshipped him, by kneeling down (Mark), and falling on his face (Luke), in the attitude of reverence and entreaty. **If thou wilt, thou canst make me clean.** If thou art willing, thou art able. He knew that he *could* cure him, because of what Jesus had done for those afflicted with equally dreadful and incurable diseases; though this is the first case recorded of healing the leprosy. But he feared lest he should not be willing to help such a loathsome outcast as he was, whom all others avoided.

NOTE that his emphasis is not on his becoming well, but on becoming clean. More than from pain, he would be free from the pollution, and shame, and repulsiveness which separated him from the clean. *Cleansing* is what sinners need.

3. **And Jesus**, "moved with compassion" (Mark). Jesus felt for the leper what he and his Father feel for all sinners, — an unutterable compassion and love. Jesus was the expression of God's heart toward men. **Put forth his hand, and touched him.** This expressed his kindly feeling and sympathy, for no one else would touch him. It showed that Jesus was not afraid of the leprosy, but believed in his own power to cure, and thus strengthened the leper's faith. It connected the healing with Jesus as the source, so that the man would turn to him for spiritual cleansing, and accept of his teaching.

I will; I am not only able, but willing. **Be thou clean.** Cleansed. Nothing Jesus loves better to do than to cleanse from all the defilement of sin. The question and answer are the same in all three records, showing how deep an impression this miracle made. Jesus willed to cleanse in this case, for he saw that the man had faith, and that the healing would be a blessing to him, and lead him to the greater spiritual cleansing. Jesus always desires to help us out of our troubles, but sometimes we are not in condition to receive the help with the greatest spiritual advantage.

Immediately. The cure was instantaneous and complete, showing that it was the result not of human, but of divine power. **His leprosy was cleansed** away from him. Mark says it departed.

NOTE. What a marvellous change was wrought in the man, — instead of disease, health; instead of foul repulsiveness, his flesh, like Naaman's (2 Kin. 5: 14), "came again like unto the flesh of a little child;" instead of being an outcast, he was restored to country and friends and family, and all the joys of social life. The blessing was unspeakably great. It transformed his body and his whole earthly life. It was like the change of mud into jewels, as described by Ruskin.[2] No one can express the greatness of the change of one defiled with sin, into a saint. It is the difference between hell and heaven.

NOTE. Jesus always brought with him an atmosphere of courage and hope. He unlocked for men the dungeon of Giant Despair. They were no longer doomed. They were no longer a part of the picture described in Zola's *Le Bête Humaine*, of a railway train dragged by an engine whose driver has been killed, dashing at headlong speed into the midnight. "The train is the

[1] Dr. C. H. Fox, in *Medical Record*.

[2] Compare the poem, *Beautiful Snow*.

4 And Jē'şus saith unto him, [k] See thou tell no man; but go thy way, [l] shew thyself to the priest, and [m] offer the gift that Mō'şeş commanded, [n] for a testimony unto them.

5 ¶ And [o] when [Je'sus he] was entered into Că-pĕr'na-ŭm, there came unto him a centurion, beseeching him,

k ch. 9. 30 & 17. 9. Mark 1. 34 & 5. 43 & 7. 36 & 8. 26. See ch. 12. 16. *l* Luke 17. 14. *m* Lev. 14. 2-32. *n* ch. 10. 18 & 24. 14. Mark 6. 11. Luke 9. 5. James 5. 3. *o* For ver. 5-13, see Luke 7. 1-10.

world, we are the freight, fate is the track, death is the darkness, God is the engineer, — who is dead." "O wretched man that I am! who shall deliver me from the body of this death? I thank God through Jesus Christ our Lord" (Rom. 7 : 24, 25).

4. **See thou tell no man.** Till you have shown yourself to the priest, and the reality of the cure is proved. He was to go immediately, without stopping to talk about his cure. Why this prohibition? (1) There was need of solitary thought and meditation on the great cure wrought in the man's body, that it might have the due spiritual effect on his soul. The bodily cleansing was the least of the blessings Jesus would confer upon him. (2) Immediate attention to the prescribed religious duties would lead him and the people to the religious meaning of the cure. (3) There is always danger of attracting too much attention to bodily healing and temporal blessings, which must be averted by ever making these outward things a channel for spiritual blessings. (4) This marvellous cure of what was then incurable, the first of its kind, would draw such crowds as to interfere with the work of Jesus, filling his time so full of healings that he could not teach as he would, or select such cases as were prepared to gain spiritual advantage from bodily cures. This actually took place, as we see from Mark's account.

Shew thyself to the priest, at Jerusalem, as was commanded by law (Lev. 14: 1-32). **Offer** "for thy cleansing," as commanded in the same law. There was a regular, careful, and prolonged examination of the case (Lev. 13), and if the man was shown to be free from leprosy, a ceremonial with various offerings (Lev. 14). **For a testimony unto them.** (1) Unto the people, who thus would know that he had actually had the leprosy, and was really cured. (2) Unto the Jewish authorities, who would thus be compelled to be witnesses to the power of Jesus, and would learn the facts concerning the works and teachings of Jesus. It would also be a testimony to them that Jesus kept the Law.

The man did not obey Jesus. He seemed to think that he himself knew best what to do, and thus by his false zeal compelled Jesus to keep away from the towns (Mark 1 : 45).

II. A CASE OF PALSY; THE CENTURION'S SERVANT, vers. 5-13.

Time. Midsummer, A. D. 28. Soon after the Sermon on the Mount (Luke 7 : 1, 2).

Place. Capernaum.

Parallel. Luke 7: 1-10.

5. **Entered into Capernaum.** By the Sea of Galilee, where he seems to have made his home during his Galilean ministry, and the centre of his work in that whole region. **There came unto him,** not in person, but by friends carrying his message, and earnestly pleading his cause (Luke), **a centurion,** a Roman military officer. "All Palestine was under Roman military government; this centurion was probably connected with the garrison at Capernaum. The Roman army was divided into legions, answering to our army corps, varying in size from three thousand to six thousand men." Each legion was divided into ten cohorts, answering to our regiments, and each cohort into six centuries, answering to our companies. A full century consisted of 100 men, but in fact, like our companies, varied from 50 to 100. A centurion was the captain of a century.

Roman Captain or Centurion.

A Character Sketch. (1) This centurion was a Gentile, as we gather from ver. 10, and from his

6 And saying, Lord, my servant lieth at home sick of the palsy, grievously tormented.

7 And Jesus saith unto him, I will come and heal him.

position in the army. (2) He was inclined to religion, for he felt kindly toward the Jewish religion, admiring and respecting its pure worship and feeling an affection for the people who practised it. Some think that the ruins of the synagogue at Tell-Hûm (the supposed site of Capernaum) are the remains of the very structure which he built and in which Christ preached. They are of white marble, "and even now after eighteen centuries, in their rich and elaborate carvings of cornices and entablatures, of capitals and niches, show with what liberal hand he had dealt his votive offerings." [1] (3) His position was extremely difficult for one in his surroundings. He was wealthy or he could not have built the synagogue at his own expense. He was a Roman army officer among heathen, who cared little for morals and less for the Jews. His position was one of great temptation and difficulty. (4) He was broad-minded enough to see how much good the religion of the Jews was doing, imperfect as it was, and contrary to all the ideas in which he had been trained, and which were popular with his class. (5) He was generous, for he built a synagogue for the Jews (Luke 7 : 5). (6) He had a good and noble character (Luke 7: 4). (7) He was kindly and loving, as is shown by his feeling toward his servant.

Compare other centurions mentioned in the New Testament, as the one at the cross; Cornelius, the centurion of Cesarea, converted through Peter; and Julius, who brought Paul to Rome.

6. **My servant**, his personal servant, a confidential attendant, like a private secretary. He was "dear unto him" (Luke), or as in R. V. margin, "precious to him," or "honorable with him;" like Joseph in the house of Potiphar, and Eliezer, the chief servant of Abraham; each one identifying himself with his master's interests. "In that age especially, slaves were often made the favorites and heirs of their masters. Many of the prominent characters in Rome were originally slaves, though they rose to honor only as freedmen." [2]

NOTE. How delightful the relation of master and servant can be, when both are of the right character and filled with the right spirit. This fact is an honor both to the centurion and to the servant.[3]

Sick of the palsy. "Palsy" is a contracted form of "paralysis." The term *palsy*, or *paralysis*, is used by the ancient physicians in a much wider sense than by our modern men of science. It included not only what we call paralysis, which is rarely very painful, but also catalepsy and tetanus, *i. e.*, cramps and lockjaw. Dr. Hastings (*Bib. Dic.*) thinks the disease of the centurion's servant may have possibly been an acute case of spinal meningitis. "*Catalepsy* is caused by a contraction of the muscles in the whole or part of the body, and is very dangerous. The effects upon the parts seized are very violent and deadly. For instance, when a person is struck with it, if his hand happens to be extended, he is unable to draw it back. *The cramps*, in Oriental countries, is a fearful malady, and by no means infrequent. It is caused by the chills of the night. The limbs when seized by it remain immovable, sometimes turned in, and sometimes out, in the same position as when they were first seized. The person afflicted resembles a man undergoing torture, and experiences nearly the same exquisite sufferings." [4]

When I was in the theological seminary at Bangor, I helped take care of a young man who was afflicted most terribly with the tetanus, or cramps, included by the ancients under the disease of palsy. This man would have frequent spasms of the cramp, so severe as to dislocate his arms, his shoulders, and sometimes even his neck, so far, at least, that it took two of us with all our strength to get his head in place after the spasm was over. During the spasms he could not be touched, for a touch then hurt him like the blow of a hammer upon a well person. During the intervals he was not only clear in his mind, but cheerful, and even brilliant in conversation.

Grievously tormented (βασανιζόμενος). The underlying Greek word means a *touchstone*, by which gold and silver are tested, hence *trials* by fire and torture. Any one who has seen at Nuremberg and other ancient cities the horrible instruments of torture by which men were tried in ancient times, gains some idea of the *torments* here described. The same word, in Matthew 14 : 24, is translated *tossed*, with the waves. The torments were like the tossing of the sea in a storm. The phrase is used in classical Greek of torture to extort confession.[5]

7. **And Jesus saith unto him**, through the delegation of Jewish elders he had sent to Jesus.

[1] Edersheim. [2] Prof. M. B. Riddle.

[3] Contrast the common treatment of servants in *Quo Vadis*.

[4] McClintock and Strong's *Cyclopedia*.

[5] See the case of Gylippus in Thucydides, VII. 86, and of the Argive in VIII. 29. Hastings, *Bib. Dic.*

8 The And the centurion answered and said, Lord, I am not worthy that thou shouldest come under my roof: but *p* speak the word only, only say the word, and my servant shall be healed.
9 For I also am a man under authority, having soldiers under me; under myself soldiers: and I say to this man, one, Go, and he goeth; and to another, Come, and he cometh; and to my servant, Do this, and he doeth it.
10 When And when Jē'sus heard it, *q* he marvelled, and said to them that followed, Verily I say unto you, I have not found so great *r* faith, no, not in Ĭs'ra-el.

p Ps. 107. 20. Cp. ver. 16. *q* Cp. Mark 6. 6. *r* See ch. 9. 2.

I will come. He went with them toward the centurion's house. Some of the delegation seem to have hastened in advance to the centurion's house, "which was probably in the suburbs," in order to relieve his anxiety before Jesus could arrive (Luke).

8. **The centurion answered,** by those who brought Jesus' message that he would go and see the sick man. They met Jesus not far from the house (Luke). The centurion probably had heard of the healing of the nobleman's son in Capernaum while Jesus was at Cana (John 4: 46–53), several months before, so that he knew the presence of Jesus was not necessary; and he also felt, **I am not worthy that thou shouldest come under my roof.** This was an expression (1) of his conscious sinfulness in the presence of a holy prophet, endowed with such wondrous power from God. (2) Jesus was viewed by him wholly from the Jewish standpoint. "As the houses of Gentiles were 'unclean,' entrance into them, and still more, familiar fellowship, would 'defile.' The centurion must have known this; and the higher he placed Jesus on the pinnacle of Judaism, the more natural was it for him to communicate with Christ through the elders of the Jews, and not to expect the personal presence of the Master, even if the application to him were attended with success." [1]

NOTE Dr. Abbott's suggestion of the three diverse estimates of the centurion. (1) His own, that he was *unworthy*, for he was a sinner; (2) the Jews thought him *worthy* because of what he had done for the church; (3) Jesus esteemed him *worthy* on account of his faith.

> "Thy God was making haste unto thy roof;
> Thy humble faith and fear keep him aloof.
> He 'll be thy guest, because he may not be, —
> He 'll enter, — into thy house? no, into thee."

Speak the word only. He would put Jesus to as little trouble as possible. He had learned a lesson from his own experience.

9. **For,** you can surely do in your sphere what I am accustomed to do in mine. I also (like Jesus, but in another sphere) **am a man under authority.** He had power indeed, but it was *authorized* and delegated power, derived from the powers above him, such as the tribunes or chief captains (Acts 21: 31) of the legion. Possibly he meant to argue, Although I am under authority, yet I command and am obeyed. How much more you, who possess authority yourself as the Messiah! **I say to this man, Go, and he goeth.** My word is all powerful in the ranks which I command. Military service demands instant, unquestioning obedience. The centurion believed that Jesus, under authority himself from God, had received similar power over the unseen forces, over diseases, over angels and spirits. "If, then, I can send my servant, and know that he will do what I bid, you can speak the word with authority, and the disease will obey you." [2]

10. **He marvelled,** for his great faith stood out so clearly amid the prevailing unbelief. "Only twice do we read in the gospel that the Saviour marvelled: once at the *unbelief* of his fellow citizens at Nazareth (Mark 6: 6), once at the *faith* of this heathen." [3] **Said to them that followed,** who needed the lesson. **I have not found so great faith, no, not in Israel,** where it would naturally be expected, for they were looking for their Messiah; they knew the true God, and that he had wrought miracles for his people in the past.

THE CENTURION'S GREAT FAITH. (1.) It was great in its object, the Son of God, the Messiah. It was founded on the Rock.

(2.) It was great because it was reasonable, not credulous, but based on the firm foundation of facts.

(3.) It was great because it expected great things.

(4.) It was great because it was unselfish, exercised for others, and thus of the noblest quality.

(5.) It was great because it was a victory over great obstacles, — his Roman skepticism, his ungodly companions, his heathen training, the evil influences of the times, the prejudices of his superiors, his pride of birth and office.

(6.) It was great because it was strong, persistent, unwavering, unfailing.

[1] Edersheim. [2] Prof. Riddle. [3] Van Oosterzee.

11 And I say unto you, That[s] many shall come from the east and the west, and
shall sit down with Ā'brā-hām, and Ī'ṣaac, and Jā'cob, in the kingdom of hea-
ven:
12 [t] But the children[u] of the kingdom[w] shall be cast out[v] into the outer darkness:
[v] there shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth.
13 And Jē'sus said unto the centurion, Go thy way; and[w] as thou hast be-
lieved, *so* be it done unto thee. [x] And his servant was healed in the selfsame hour.

s Luke 13. 29. Eph. 3. 6. Cp. Isai. 59. 19 & Mal. 1. 11. *t* Luke 13. 28. Cp. ch. 19. 30 & 21. 41, 43. *u* ch. 22. 13 & 25. 30. *v* ch. 13. 42, 50 & 22. 13 & 24. 51 & 25. 30. Luke 13. 28. *w* ch. 9. 29. *x* John 4. 53. Cp. ch. 9. 22.

(7.) It was great because it was a living, growing faith. It had been long maturing. It had led him to build a synagogue, to learn about the true God, to send for Jesus. It was faith joined to works. It was "faith that made faithful."

11. **And I say unto you.** Through this noble experience of faith Jesus saw, as through a telescope or in a vision, the world-harvest of Gentile believers, whole nations flocking into the kingdom of God, as foretold by Isaiah. His work would not fail. His own people might reject him, but the kingdom would come. **Many shall come.** (See Isaiah 60.) **From the east and west.** Luke adds north and south, including all nations. This vision began to be realized on Pentecost (Acts 2: 5–11), and has been growing brighter every century since. Jesus never failed, even in the darkest times, to believe in the triumph of his kingdom. **And shall sit down,** "literally, *recline* (see margin R. V.), — *i. e.*, at table. The custom of the Persians, which spread to the Greeks and Romans, had also been adopted by the Jews, viz., to lie on a couch while eating."[1] They should partake of all the blessings and satisfactions of the new kingdom, which were represented by a wedding banquet. (Luke 14: 15; 22: 29, 30; Rev. 19: 9.) **With Abraham,** the ancestor of the Jews, the father of the faithful, the founder of the Jewish development of **the kingdom of heaven,** both on earth and in heaven. The Gentiles should become children and heirs of Abraham by faith. (See Gal. 3: 7, 29; Rom. 11.)

12. **But the children of the kingdom,** those who were the literal descendants of Abraham, and had been chosen and trained for the kingdom, and were actually members of it in outward form. **Shall be cast out into outer darkness.** "The figure of a feast is still continued. Feasts were always held toward evening, and frequently protracted to a late hour (Luke 12: 38). The banqueting-house is lighted up; within is joy and festivity, but without is darkness. The streets are narrow and filthy, and unillumined by any light whatever. To be cast out into the outer darkness in the chilly night, such as they have in the East, to rove around the filthy streets, exposed to robbers and ferocious dogs, were the opposite of enjoying the feast within, a vivid representation of the spiritual blindness and the miserable condition of those who had been so highly privileged with the Law and the Prophets, and with the first announcement of the glad tidings of salvation."[2] This prophecy was terribly fulfilled forty years later at the destruction of Jerusalem, which was a type of the spiritual and eternal. **There shall be the weeping** that belongs to outer darkness, **and gnashing of teeth,** expressing the intensest agony and disappointment.

This vision of the future was the warning of love to prevent the Jews from experiencing it.

13. **Jesus said,** in a message through the friends the centurion had sent. **Go thy way.** Attend to your usual duties. Perhaps, also, with a spiritual application, — Go on your way of faith, the right way in which you have started, and it will lead you to the highest good.

As thou hast believed, so be it done unto thee. His great faith should receive a great blessing. As wide as his faith was the blessing. His faith went farther than the expectation of physical healing, even to insight into the nature and mission of Jesus as the Son of God; so there was given unto him more than the physical healing, even a drawing nigh in spirit to Jesus, and a fuller entrance into the kingdom of God. The physical healings of Jesus were always the channels through which flowed spiritual blessings.

Healed (ἰάθη), a stronger word than Christ used in his promise in ver. 7 (θεραπεύσω, *to treat medically.*) Christ's fulfilments are ever stronger and fuller than even his promises. **In the selfsame hour,** showing that the healing was miraculous, the quick answer to faith.

Practical Lessons. I. Palsy as a type of sin. Sin in the soul takes all the forms which paralysis does in the body. (1) Sometimes it takes away or dulls the sense of feeling. Its victims are insensible to the goodness of God, the appeals of reason, the truths of religion.

[1] Broadus. [2] G. W. Clark.

They are, as the Apostle says, "past feeling." (2) It sometimes weakens the will, so that even when men would do good, evil is present with them. They put off duty; they know, but will not come to a decision. They become like a patient in one of our city hospitals, where the will itself had lost its power of action. (3) Sometimes sin, like what in those days came under the name of palsy, produces a fixed condition of evil with intense tortures of conscience.

II. Christ is our helper in our bodily sicknesses and pains, and in those of our loved ones. He will sometimes cure. He will always make everything to work together for good. He often, by leading to the keeping of his commandments, prevents sickness.

III. It is right and good to pray for temporal blessings, for anything we need, for God loves to give us every good gift.

IV. By the faith gained from these we obtain faith for higher and better things. The stairway to heaven begins on earth. Sickness, especially in its convalescence, leads men to see this world, and the spiritual world, and eternal things in a new and truer light. It compels to rest and meditation. Many, like Jacob, from a pillow of stones in the night of sorrow, have seen visions of heaven and their Father, and received the messages God's angels have brought. Countless stars, invisible by day, shine upon us in the night. The felt need of God makes us stretch out the hands of our faith and take a stronger hold on God. The stormy sea makes us look for the helping hand of Jesus. And we often learn more of faith in one month of darkness and storm than in years of sunshine.

V. Great faith is possible under the most unfavorable circumstances.[1]

VI. The centurion's faith was a well founded faith. The centurion knew what Jesus had done for others. His faith was founded on facts. It was built upon the actual experience of others. The Christian has a good reason for what he believes. It may be the character of the one in whom he believes, or the things he has done. We trust a doctor because we know his skill from what he has done for others. We trust the judgment of a business man because we have seen in many cases how good his judgment is. The Christian knows what Jesus has done for others, therefore the same Saviour can give the same salvation and power to him. He knows what Jesus is doing in the world wherever his gospel comes, therefore he can and will repeat the same glorious triumphs of the cross.

VII. It was faith joined to works. The centurion did all he could. He sent to Jesus and let him know and besought him. He trusted him. "Faith is an active, not a passive, virtue; it is not, as it has sometimes been defined, just trusting to God; it is trusting to God, and *keeping one's powder dry*. My objection to the faith cure is that it is wanting in faith. Faith consists, not in believing that God will do for us what we can do for ourselves, but in undertaking to do with courage and hope the work he has given us to do because he will help us. To do nothing but pray is not faith; it is unfaith."[2] On the other hand, to seek without asking, to labor without praying, is to fail in faith, and lose the best blessing which comes with the gifts from the hands of God, the consciousness that they *are* gifts, that they are doubly blessed as proofs of his love, with his "image and superscription upon them."

VIII. This incident is a clear illustration of the faith required for salvation from the disease of sin. Jesus wants to help us. We feel our need. We go to him for help. We believe he can save us and ours, for he has saved others. We are ready to do whatever he bids us. We trust his word as eternally true. We use our faith for others as well as ourselves. Such faith leads to love and devotion to our Master and his cause.

IX. How to obtain faith. "So far as I can see, there is only one way in which faith is got, and it is the same in the religious world as it is in the world of men and women. I learn to trust you, my brother, as I come to know you. I watch you, I live with you, I find out that you are trustworthy, and I come to trust myself to you, and lean upon you."[3]

X. God's blessings are given according to our faith, that is, according to our willingness and capacity to receive. The blessing fills the cup of faith full; it is given according to our utmost capacity. The poor widow was told to go to her neighbors and borrow pots and vessels, and pour out from her oil jar into them. The oil was miraculously increased till every vessel was full. If she had had faith to borrow more vessels, she would have had more oil; if less faith, less oil. Her faith was the measure of God's gift to her (2 Kings 4:1–7).

III. A CASE OF FEVER; PETER'S WIFE'S MOTHER, vers. 14, 15.

TIME. A Sabbath day in the spring of A. D. 28. Two months before the Sermon on the Mount.

PLACE. Capernaum. Part of a very busy day.

PARALLELS. Mark 1:29–31; Luke 4:38, 39.

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[1] See *Julius Cæsar*, Act I., Scene 2.

"The fault, dear Brutus, is not in our stars,
But in ourselves, that we are underlings."

[2] Lyman Abbott. See *Saint Indefatigable* for illustrations.

[3] Prof. Drummond.

14 ¶ [y] And when Jē'sus was come into Pē'tēr's house, he saw [z] his wife's mother laid, and lying sick of a fever.

15 And he [a] touched her hand, and the fever left her: and she arose, and ministered unto them. him.

16 ¶ When the And when even was come, they brought unto him many that were [b] possessed with devils: and he cast out the spirits [c] with his [a] word, and healed all that were sick:

17 [d] That that it might be fulfilled which was spoken by E-sa'ias I-sa'iah the prophet, saying, [e] Himself took our infirmities, and bare our sicknesses. our diseases.

y For vers. 14–16, see Mark 1. 29–34 & Luke 4. 38–41. *z* 1 Cor. 9. 5. *a* Cp. ch. 9. 25. *b* vers. 28, 33. See ch. 4. 24. *c* Cp. ver. 8. *d* See ch. 1. 22. *e* Cited from Isai. 53. 4.

14. **And when Jesus was come**, from the synagogue where he had been preaching, and where during the services he had cast a fierce unclean spirit out of a demoniac. He went with four of his disciples, Andrew, Peter, James, and John, to **Peter's house**. Peter and his brother, though natives of Bethsaida (John 1 : 44), seem to be now living in Capernaum. All the chosen four went with Jesus.

His wife's mother. This distinctly implies that Peter was married, and makes it strange that the Roman Catholics should lay so much stress on the celibacy of the clergy. From 1 Cor. 9: 5, it appears that his wife may sometimes have accompanied her husband.

NOTE. The French version charmingly translates *wife's mother*, "*belle mère*," "beautiful mother." Peter and his family had none of that insipid nonsense about mothers-in-law which supplies so many would-be-witty people with stale jokes. Peter's wife was a part of himself; and he would not have been worthy to be an apostle, nor even a lowest disciple of Jesus, had he not cared for his wife's mother as he would for his own.

Sick of a fever. Luke calls it a great fever, of a severe, malignant, and dangerous type. The Greek for fever is derived from πῦρ, *fire*, as our word *fever* is akin to the Latin *fervere, to be hot, to boil*. "The quantity of marshy land in the neighborhood, especially at the entrance of the Jordan into the lake, has made fever of a very malignant type at times the characteristic of the locality, so that the physicians would not allow Josephus, when hurt by his horse sinking in the neighboring marsh, to sleep even a single night in Capernaum, but hurried him on to Tarichæa." [1]

15. **Touched her hand**. To express his kindly sympathy and courtesy, and to make it evident that the miraculous cure came from him. Luke says, he "rebuked the fever," commanded it to go, as if it were an enemy. **The fever left her; and she arose, and ministered unto them.** "Such a fever invariably leaves the patient weak. The period of convalescence is always long and trying, often full of danger. The fact that she ministered unto them (*i. e.*, served in the ordinary duties of the household) shows that Christ in healing the disease also imparted health and strength, and it demonstrates the miraculous character of the cure." [2]

IV. A SUMMARY OF ONE SABBATH EVENING'S WORK OF JESUS, vers. 16, 17.

TIME. Spring of A. D. 28. The same day as the healing of Peter's wife's mother.

PLACE. Capernaum.

16. **When the even was come**, as the sun was setting (Mark). The multitude came after sunset, (1) because the heat of the day would have been too distressing to the sick; (2) because they did not wish to violate the sacred rest of the Sabbath day. At sunset the Sabbath ended; and so they felt themselves free to act. (3) By this time the news of Christ's miraculous power, two examples of which are reported, would have had time to spread over the city. The people recognized both the power and the willingness of Jesus to heal, so that "all the city was gathered together at the door" (Luke), probably of Peter's house.

Many that were possessed with devils. With demons or evil spirits. "The word *devil* or *devils* is never used in the original when demoniacs are spoken of. It is always the word *demon* or *demons*, or the generic term *spirit* or *spirits*."

Healed all that were sick, with various forms of disease (Mark). He laid his hands on them as he did with Peter's mother-in-law.

> "The brow grows cool, the pulse beats calm,
> Health pours through every vein like balm." [3]

17. **That it might be fulfilled**. That the picture of the promised Messiah, given by Esaias (Isaiah) in chapter 53, might be seen to be the

[1] Geikie. [2] Abbott. [3] Geo. L. Taylor.

portrait of Jesus. The description given centuries before fitted Jesus, thus proving that he was the Messiah. Jesus did not help people because that was foretold, but being the Messiah it was his natural work; and the prophet in his vision of the Messiah saw him doing these things.

Himself took (ἔλαβε), the verb means *to take, to take in order to carry away.*[1]

Infirmities (ἀσθενείας, from ἀ, *not*, and σθένος, *strength*), *debilitating diseases* from the weakness they produce. **Bare** (ἐβάστασεν), *bore as a burden laid upon him.* The word means *to take up in order to carry*, also *to bear away, to carry off.*[2] **Our sicknesses** (νόσους), *diseases*, allied to the Latin *noceo, to hurt*, the emphasis is on the idea of something severe, dangerous, painful, violent. He bears even our severest pains and griefs. How did Jesus bear their sicknesses? (1) He bore them in his heart in sympathy. He did not stand aloof, but suffered with them as every one does who cares for the diseased in body or in soul. It brings weariness and exhaustion, as no mere hard work can do. It always costs to really help others. (2) He bore them away by his healing power. Healing the body was one of the ways by which he was enabled to heal the soul. Jesus is not only loving, but divine, and still bears the griefs of his children away, by removing them, or by transforming them into blessings, and by the many ways in which his Gospel lessens the troubles and sicknesses of men. (3) This was an object lesson of his bearing the diseases of the soul, by forgiving, by his atonement on the cross, by his coming from heaven and giving his whole life to delivering men from sin. He bears them on his heart, and he bears them away.

"All the experience of modern missionaries in the East goes to show the wisdom of the method employed by Jesus Christ and his apostles in giving attention to diseased bodies as a means of access to diseased souls."

"The medical mission is the outcome of the living teachings of our faith. I have now visited such missions in many parts of the world, and never saw one which was not healing, helping, blessing, softening prejudice, diminishing suffering, . . . telling in every work of love and of consecrated skill of the infinite compassion of him who 'came, not to destroy men's lives, but to save them.'"[3]

Calls for Healing in the East. "It requires but a cursory view of the East to give a new understanding of the Bible pictures of a multitude of halt, and maimed, and blind, and diseased needing cure." "Palestine now, as doubtless was the case in the days of our Lord, seems fairly overrun with those afflicted by one form or another of bodily ailment." They fairly thronged the entrance ways to Jerusalem, and the paths to Gethsemane, and the Mount of Olives.

"And for these there is little help. There are no hospitals or poorhouses. The native doctors have little scientific knowledge of the healing art, so that the Talmud says, 'The best of physicians deserves hell.'"[4]

What is a Miracle? A miracle is the personal intervention of God by his will into the chain of cause and effect in nature. It is such an intervention as shows the presence and action of a supernatural power. It is not a "breaking of the laws of nature," nor "the suspension of the laws of nature," nor any change in the laws of nature, but simply God's doing with his infinite power the same *quality* of action, though vastly greater in degree, that we do every hour when we exert our personal will amid the forces of nature. I lift up a book, I turn on the water from the water-works, and make a shower on my parched lawn or garden. I stop a part of the machinery in the factory and rescue a child caught in its wheels. These acts break no law of nature, they suspend none, they change none. They are simply the intervention of my personal will into the laws. It is the same when God, by his infinite power, lifts up a mountain or raises the dead. It is his personal will touching nature and showing that God himself is there.

Miracles Natural to Christ. If there is a personal God, it is as natural that he should work a miracle, for sufficient reasons, as it is that the owner of a factory should interfere to save a child who is caught in the machinery or the captain of a ship to reverse his engines to save a drowning man. To accept a miracle when proved is scientific. Even such scientists as Professor Huxley (*Popular Science Monthly*) agree to this. It is simply a question of proof. If Jesus was the Son of God, the power to work miracles was a natural accompaniment. He bears the same relation to the powers of nature as a watchmaker does to the watch when he sets the hands to the right time.[5]

Miracles were a Testimony to the Authority of Christ. They are God's signature and seal to the words which his messengers speak. The divine words, which cannot be fully tested in themselves, are proved to be from God by visi-

[1] Thayer, *Gr. Lex.*

[2] Ibid.

[3] Isabella Bird Bishop. Hawthorne's *Mosses from an Old Manse*, "Earth's Holocaust," of all burdens, cares, sickness, and pain.

[4] Trumbull's *Studies in Oriental Social Life*, "Calls for Healing in the East." *A Colony of Mercy* describes what Christianity is doing for all forms of disease in a town in Germany. Whittier's *Poems*, "Our Master."

[5] See W. C. Prime's *Along New England Roads*, "A Village Discussion." Van Dyke's *Gospel for an Age of Doubt*, p. 420.

ble signs and deeds which only God can produce. These should have three marks which test their truth: (1) They are wrought by good men, (2) in attestation of a message which, while beyond our knowledge, does not contradict our conscience and reason, but is in harmony with the other words of God. (3) They must be worthy of God, helpful, useful, a blessing, never done merely to startle and excite wonder, but expressions of God's holy character, his love, tenderness, pity, goodwill to men. A distinction here will help us to understand this more clearly. "'Suppose,' says Matthew Arnold, 'I could change the pen with which I write this into a penwiper, I should not thus make what I write the truer or more convincing.' Nor would such a miracle prove a Bible doctrine or interpretation to be true. But were I to read the report of a traveller, I could not be influenced in judgment or conduct by it unless I had evidence that he had been in the country he described, and is not spinning a yarn, Defoe-like, out of his own fertile imagination. The philosopher needs no authentication; his philosophy is its own evidence. But a witness to facts otherwise not known, and perhaps not otherwise discoverable, always requires some authentication. The distinction is perfectly simple; and we act upon it in every-day life. Now Christ came as a witness to heavenly facts about God and the immortality and destiny of the soul, and miracles are the authentication of his credibility. They are God's signature to his testimony."[1]

The Miracles of Christ are Object Lessons. Every miracle is a visible picture before men of the character of God, of the nature of the gospel, of the lovingkindness of our Saviour, of his power to help, of the wonders of grace he can work in our hearts, of his power to deliver from the diseases of sin. There were many miracles of all kinds to show that Jesus has power over all kinds of diseases, all the many forms of evil of which they are a type, over demons, over the forces of nature.[2]

These Miracles were Types of the Beneficent Effects of Christianity. Christ tells us that those who believe in him shall do greater works than he, and it is true that Christ in his Christianity is doing on a far larger scale the works of Christ than it was possible for him to do in Palestine. The kindly feeling, the desire to help, the increased skill, which spring up under Christianity as flowers and fruits grow in the sunshine, have made Christ's works through his people greater than those he wrought on earth. They are not miracles, but are better than the power of miracles, as the prolonged sunshine is better than a flash of lightning. Blind asylums have opened many eyes, and caused people to read and work even without sight. Hospitals have cured and cared for multitudes of sick and insane. We cannot raise the dead to life, but the average length of life has been greatly increased. The day laborer has more of the best things in the world — books, libraries, churches, railroads, telegraphs, newspapers — than kings have in heathen lands.

Moral Miracles. "When a man declares to me, 'I cannot believe in miracles,' I reply, 'I can, because I have witnessed them.' 'When and where?' 'On a certain street in this city is a man who was a week ago given over to every form of vice and brutality, and who is now a good citizen, an honest workman, a kind husband, a loving father, a pure, upright man. Surely that is such a miracle as makes me forever believe in the possibility of miracles.'"[3]

V. STILLING THE TEMPEST, AND ASSOCIATED INCIDENTS, vers. 18–27.

Time. Autumn of A. D. 28. Some weeks after the Sermon on the Mount.

Place. The Sea of Galilee, and opposite shores.

Parallels. To vers. 23–27; Mark 4: 35–41; Luke 8: 22–25. A parallel to vers. 18–22 is found in Luke 9: 57–60 (Andrews); but others place these incidents later, in connection with Jesus' final departure from Galilee. This passage belongs to the evening of an eventful and a weary day in the life of Jesus. The morning began with miracles; by noon an immense throng had gathered around him; and all the afternoon he taught them in parables. With the evening came the exhaustion of his body and the reaction upon his highly wrought mind. On that busy day our Lord had first healed a demoniac (Matt. 12: 22), then encountered the accusation of his family (Mark 3: 20, 21); and afterwards the accusation of the Pharisees (Mark 3: 22–30; more fully in Matt. 12: 24–45), then his mother and brethren had sought him (Mark 3: 32–35; Matt. 12: 46–50); and after some discourses narrated by Luke only (ch. 11: 37 to 12: 59), departing to the seaside, he had given the long discourse, parts of which are recorded in Mark 4 and Matt. 13; and at last had encountered the half-hearted followers described in verses 18–22 just as the evening was falling upon them (Mark 4: 35).

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[1] Condensed from *The Outlook*.

[2] In Tennyson's *Idylls of the King*, a knight says that he can find God's goodness in the stars, in the flowers, in the fields, but not in his ways with man. But the wondrous works of Jesus show his goodness in his ways with man.

[3] Prof. Henry Drummond.

18 ¶ Now [f] when Jē'ṣus saw great multitudes about him, [g] he gave commandment to depart unto the other side.

19 [h] And [a certain scribe came, there came a scribe,] and said unto him, Master, I will follow thee whithersoever thou goest.

20 And Jē'ṣus saith unto him, The foxes have holes, and the birds of the [air heaven] *have* [i] nests; but the Son of man hath not where to lay [his his] head.

21 And another of [his the] disciples said unto him, Lord, suffer me first to go and bury my father.

f Cp. ch. 14. 22 & John 6. 15–17. *g* Mark 4. 35. Luke 8. 22. *h* For vers. 19–22, see Luke 9. 57–60. *i* ch. 13. 32 (for mg.).

18. **Now when Jesus saw great multitudes about him**, who had been witnessing his miracles, and listening to his parables and other discourses by the seaside, **he gave commandment to depart.** He was sitting in the boat where he had been teaching the multitudes on the shore (Mark 4 : 1), when he gave orders to the disciples to prepare the boat for a voyage. During the preparation he probably went on shore (ver. 23), where he met the scribe and disciple. The reasons for his departure were probably (1) he was weary with his long and hard day's work, for he soon fell asleep on the voyage. He could not rest while the multitudes were thronging him, and hence retired to the thinly populated regions on the opposite shore. (2) His disciples, too, would need the quiet and rest. Rest is as essential to good work as is activity. (3) Some think that he dismissed the crowds to avoid the suspicion of fomenting disturbance. (4) He had really done all he could for the multitudes. It was better for them to go home and think, and lay up his sayings in their memory.

19. **And a certain scribe**, a Rabbi, a teacher of the law, one of the learned profession, **came, and said unto him**, just as he was leaving. This Rabbi had been impressed by the teaching. Perhaps he thought that his learning and position would make the offer attractive to Jesus. He may have thought that this marvellous wonder-worker and winning teacher might possibly be the Messiah. He may have hoped to have part in the new kingdom, and possibly partake of Jesus' marvellous power.

Master, *i. e.*, teacher, a term of respect, especially from one who was himself a teacher. **I will follow thee**, on his voyage, and also adhere to him as one of those who continually associated with him.

20. **And Jesus saith unto him.** Christ did not reject the proffered service, but neither did he accept it. Perhaps "in the man's flaring enthusiasm he saw the smoke of egotistical self-deceit."[1] Christ simply showed the scribe, who was accustomed to home, and wealth, and honor, what his choice really meant. He would never seek to obtain disciples by hiding the truth. He would have him "count the cost," go forward with open eyes, that his choice might be sincere and from the heart. The scribe was welcome, and more than welcome, if he came truly to the Lord as his master and teacher. **The foxes have holes.** Caves, dens. **And the birds of the air have nests.** Literally, "lodging-places." **But the Son of man**, although the Messiah, the King of the Jews, **hath not where to lay his head.** Has no settled home, no earthly property. Some one always, doubtless, gave him a place to lodge, but he owned none by earthly tenure. The Son of God, the King of kings, the Creator of all things, voluntarily gave up all in order that he might thus best save men.

We do not know whether the scribe accepted Jesus as his teacher when he learned what his act meant, or whether he turned away sorrowfully. "Many a man begins a religious life full of warmth and zeal, and by and by loses all his first love, and turns back again to the world. He liked the new uniform, and the bounty money, and the name of a Christian soldier; but he never considered the watching and warring and wounds and conflicts which Christian soldiers must endure."[2]

21. **And another of his disciples.** A disciple is a learner. This one was probably a true disciple, but one who needed confirming and teaching. **Said unto him**, in answer to Jesus' invitation to follow him. **Suffer me first to go and bury my father**, who was probably either dead or at the point of death. According to Rev. Ezra Isaacs, the customs of burial in such a case were very ceremonious and burdensome, continuing with daily visits from an Elder or Rabbi for a whole month. The young man was evidently not at home when his father died, but may have been on his way there. If he returned, it would mean that he would be under the influence of the enemies of Jesus for a month.

[1] Farrar.

[2] Ryle.

22 But Jē′sus said unto him, Follow me; and let leave *j* the dead to bury their own dead.

23 ¶ *k* And when he was entered into a ship, his disciples followed him.

24 And, behold, there arose a great tempest in the sea, insomuch that the ship was covered with the waves: but *l* he was asleep.

25 And his disciples they came to him, and awoke him, saying, *m* Lord, save us: Save, Lord; we perish.

26 And he saith unto them, Why are ye *n* fearful, *o* O ye of little faith? Then he arose, and *p* rebuked the winds and the sea; and *q* there was a great calm.

j Cp. John 5. 25. *k* For ver. 23–27, see Mark 4. 36–41 & Luke 8. 22–25. Cp. John 6. 16–21. *l* Cp. John 4. 6, 7. *m* Cp. ch. 14. 30. *n* John 14. 27. *o* See ch. 6. 30. *p* Ps. 104. 6, 7. Cp. Luke 4. 39. *q* Job 38. 11. Ps. 65. 7. Cp. ch. 14. 32.

22. **And let the dead bury their dead.** Referring not merely to the act of burying, but also to the long ceremonies of mourning. "Let those who are spiritually dead bury those who are naturally dead."[1] Let the higher duties take the precedence over the lower. He should not spend time in useless mourning, as the worldly do. The best cure of his sorrow was earnest work for the Master. All these cases, joined with one more reported by Luke, gain force under the circumstances where Luke places them when Jesus was taking his final leave of Galilee, and going to Jerusalem to be crucified.

23. **And when he was entered into a ship,** "a boat, the one in which he had been teaching (Mark 4: 36), the one which, possibly belonging to Peter or the sons of Zebedee, was always ready at their Master's service."[2] **His disciples followed him.** "They were wise to follow him, and safe in so doing; but they were not therefore secure from trial. In the boat with Jesus is a happy place, but storms may come even when we are there."[3]

24. **And, behold, there arose a great tempest in the sea.** "A great *tempest*" (σεισμός, *earthquake*), such a commotion of the marine elements as corresponds to an *earthquake*. Mark and Luke call it λαῖλαψ, a *furious* storm, a hurricane. The lake of Gennesaret is subject to sudden and violent squalls and storms. Dr. W. M. Thomson says that on a certain occasion, in his experience, "The sun had scarcely set when the wind began to rush down toward the lake; and it continued all night long with constantly increasing violence, so that when we reached the shore next morning, the face of the lake was like a huge boiling caldron. The wind howled down every wady from the north-east and east with such fury that no efforts of rowers could have brought a boat to shore at any point along that coast. To understand the causes of these sudden and violent tempests, we must remember that the lake lies low, 600 feet lower than the ocean; that the vast and naked plateaus of the Jaulan rise to a great height, spreading backward to the wilds of the Hauran, and upward to snowy Hermon; that the water-courses have cut out profound ravines and wild gorges, converging to the head of the lake, and that these act like gigantic *funnels* to draw down the cold winds from the mountains. On the occasion referred to we subsequently pitched our tents at the shore, and remained for three days and nights exposed to this tremendous wind. We had to double-pin all the tent ropes, and frequently were obliged to hang with our whole weight upon them to keep the quivering tabernacle from being carried up bodily into the air."[4]

But he was asleep. "'In the hinder part of the ship on a pillow,' says Mark; that is, in a little cabin, enjoying the deep, sweet repose consequent on natural exhaustion. How really and thoroughly human! It is delightful to realize it."[5] Here he shows his human nature, as his stilling the tempest displayed his divine nature. The two elements together make a perfect Saviour.

25. **And his disciples came to him.** This shows they had faith in him, although it was feeble. **Lord, save us: we perish.** More graphic in the abrupt form of the original as reproduced in the R. V., "Save, Lord; we perish." "Us" is not in the best MSS.

Note the variations in the report, — in Luke, "Master, Master, we perish;" in Mark, "Master, carest thou not that we perish?" All three reports are correct. One disciple cried out in one way, others in different words. Some one puts it thus: Little Faith prayed, *Save us;* Much Fear cried, *We perish;* Distrust urged, *Carest thou not?* More Faith said, *Lord;* Discipleship called out, *Teacher* (Mark); Faint Hope cried, *Master, thou with authority* (Luke). The whole made a vivid scene.

26. **Why are ye fearful?** Why cannot you trust me? **O ye of little faith,** who have seen so much of my power, know me as the Messiah, and yet are afraid of a storm with me in the boat. Why have you not larger faith in me?

[1] Canon Cook. [2] Ellicott. [3] Spurgeon. [4] *Land and Book*, new edition, ii. 351. [5] Morison.

27 Rnd And the men *r* marvelled, saying, What manner of man is this, that even the *s* winds and the sea obey him?

28 ¶ *t* And when he was come to the other side into the country of the

r Cp. Mark 1. 27. *s* Cp. Luke 5. 9. *t* For ver. 28–ch. 9. 1, see Mark 5. 1–21 & Luke 8. 26–40.

He arose, and rebuked the winds, by saying, according to Mark (4: 39), "Peace, be still;" πεφίμωσο, *be muzzled* like an ox; *be silent*, the same word that Christ uses to the demon in Mark 1: 25. **And there was a great calm.** Mark adds, "the wind ceased," ἐκόπασεν, *grew weary, tired*, "a beautiful and picturesque word. The sea sank to rest as if exhausted by its own beating." [1]

27. **The men marvelled.** Meaning the disciples, and other sailors if any were in the boat (see Mark 4: 36). **What manner of man is this?** The inconceivable wonder of arresting a hurricane was a new revelation of Jesus' power even to his disciples.

PRACTICAL SUGGESTIONS.

1. This experience was CHRIST'S SCHOOL OF FAITH, wherein he taught his disciples the lesson of faith in him, wrought into their very natures; and thus prepared them for the greater moral tempests which were soon to assail them.

2. This storm is the type of the TEMPEST OF SIN. Sin always raises a storm, as it did in Jonah's case. All the diseases, oppressions, cruelties, gnawings of conscience, lives without hope, and hearts without rest, are a part of the tempest raised by sin. But the greatest fury of the storm is in the future. There is no true human escape from this storm. No earthly voice can bid the winds and waves to cease. But Christ, by his forgiving love, says, "Peace, be still," for all that call on him, and arches over all the bow of peace.

3. This boat in the storm on Galilee was a SYMBOL OF THE SOUL IN THE STORMS OF LIFE which overtake every individual at times. Our life is a voyage. We are not like a ship safely anchored in the harbor, but like one ploughing its way over an ocean, battling with storms, exposed to a thousand dangers, seeking a harbor in a better land.

"'Tis wonderful! And yet, my boy, just such is life.
Life is a sea as fathomless,
As wide, as terrible, and yet sometimes as calm and beautiful. The light of heaven
Smiles on it, and 't is decked with every hue of glory and of joy. Anon dark clouds
Arise, contending winds of fate go forth, and Hope sits weeping o'er a general wreck.
And thou must sail upon this sea a long, eventful voyage. The wise *may* suffer wreck,
The foolish *must*. Oh, then, be early wise! Learn from the mariner his skillful art —
To ride upon the waves and catch the breeze and dare the threatening storm and trace a path,
'Mid countless dangers, to the destined port, unerringly secure."

But on this voyage, if we are disciples, Christ is with us, though like the guardian angel in Cole's series of pictures of *Voyage of Life*, he is sometimes seen plainly, and sometimes, as in the picture of *Manhood*, unseen by the voyager. He seems asleep or hidden, but the angels can see that he is ever with us to guide and guard.

4. This boat in the storm is the TYPE OF THE CHURCH OF CHRIST. (1) "The *boat* is the Church of Christ, and it sails across the ocean of the world's history to the 'other side' of the life beyond the grave." [2] "Ours is a ship on a voyage, not a ship in a harbor; a ship in progress." [3] (2) The disciples are in this boat toiling and laboring anxiously to take the boat to the place where the Lord commanded. (3) Their Lord Jesus Christ is in the boat with them. There is no church in which Jesus does not dwell. (4) The tempest represents the storms of persecution, of opposition, of worldliness, of false doctrine, and every opposing force which the great enemy of good can excite against the people of God. (5) Jesus sometimes seems asleep in the storm. He lets the storm rage and does not at once interfere. The delay seems long, and the faint-hearted, looking at the waves rather than at Jesus, sometimes lose courage. But the object of the delay is to increase our faith. (6) Our hope lies not in the absence of danger, but in the presence of Christ, who is able to control the storm. No church with Christ in it can be wrecked or lost. More of the living Christ, more of his love, more of his teaching, more faith in him, more prayer to him, more of his Holy Spirit, more of his holy life — these are the salvation and hope of the Church.

VII. EVIL SPIRITS CAST OUT; THE GADARENE DEMONIAC, vers. 28–34.

TIME. Autumn of A. D. 28. The morning following the storm.

PLACE. In the country of the Gadarenes on the southeast shore of the Sea of Galilee.

PARALLELS. Mark 5: 1–20; Luke 8: 26–39.

OTHER SIMILAR MIRACLES. Matt. 9: 32–34; 12: 22–30; 15: 22–28; 17: 14–21; Mark 1: 23–27.

28. **When he was come to the other side, of**

[1] Prof. M. R. Vincent. [2] Ellicott. [3] Macdonald.

Ger'ge-senes, Gad'a-renes, there met him two "possessed with devils, coming forth out of the tombs, exceeding fierce, so that no man might could pass by that way.

u ver. 16. Cp. Rev. 18. 2.

the Sea of Galilee. The voyage had been in a southeasterly direction from Capernaum. **Into the country of the Gergesenes**, or, as best MSS., **Gadarenes**. This region is variously called *Gadarenes*, from the large region of which the city of Gadara was the chief city; or *Gergesenes*, from Gergesa or the modern Gersa, a town in the immediate vicinity of the event described; or *Gerasenes*, from the city Gerasa, which is either a different pronunciation of Gersa, as is most probable, or designates the territory of the city of Gerasa, thirty miles from the Sea of Galilee. In which case Gerasenes designated the people of the larger territory which included the Gadarenes and their small village of Gergesenes, as New York State includes Long Island and its city of Brooklyn, and the same event may be said to have taken place in any one of the three. **There met him two**, one of which was the more prominent and remarkable, and hence is alone mentioned by Mark and Luke. "A familiar example will illustrate the principle. In the year 1824 Lafayette visited the United States; and was everywhere welcomed with honors and pageants. Historians will describe this as a noble incident in his life. Other writers will relate the same visit as made, and the same honors as enjoyed, by two persons, viz.: Lafayette and his son. Will there be any contradiction between these two classes of writers? Will not both record the truth?"[1]

THE SCENE. Early morning. On a narrow strip of shore, with a steep cliff rising high in the background, on the level summit of which swine are feeding; and in the foreground the lake beneath. On this narrow strip stand Jesus and his disciples, while the demoniacs are approaching.

Possessed with devils. Better, *demons*. Mark calls them "unclean spirits." Demons are called unclean because they are impure, unholy, defiling, and produce such effects both in the body and the spirit of those whom they possess. The outward filth was a type of the moral defilement. The devil's characteristic work is to ruin both body and soul. **Coming out of the tombs.** "These were natural or artificial excavations in the rocks, frequently cut laterally in the hills, and often left uncovered, which like other caves would be resorts for wild men and beasts."[2]

"Many are so constructed as to form a not uncomfortable dwelling. Sane dwellers in tombs are not uncommon at the present day." There are many of these tombs in Palestine, and they may still be seen in the mountain back of Gersa. Here the demoniac had his home; for "all maniacs were outcasts as soon as they became violent, for that age had no provision for taking care of them. Institutions of pity for the unfortunate are among the gifts of Christ; antiquity knew nothing of them, or of the spirit that would produce them."[3]

Exceeding fierce, so that no man could bind them successfully; for though fetters and chains had often been put on them, their preternatural strength had broken and rent them asunder (Mark). Luke says they had for a time worn no clothes; and Mark that no man had strength to tame them. Thus it was not safe for any person to approach them, and therefore **no man might pass by that way**.

DEMONIAC POSSESSIONS. "It is not easy to answer the question, What was this demoniacal possession? But we may gather from the Gospel narrative some important ingredients for our description. The demoniac was one whose being was strangely interpenetrated by one or more of those fallen spirits who are constantly asserted in Scripture (under the name of demons, evil spirits, unclean spirits, their chief being the Devil or Satan) to be the enemies and tempters of the souls of men. There appears to have been in him a double will and double consciousness,—sometimes the cruel spirit thinking and speaking in him, sometimes his poor crushed self crying out to the Saviour of men for mercy."[3] Demoniac possession is "the caricature of inspiration." We know who inspires by the effects produced. The demoniac is a specimen, physically, of Satan's kingdom, as a healthy saint is of the kingdom of heaven. (1) This was a real possession, not a mere imagination or superstition. Recent psychical researches, especially in the line of hypnotism, "so far from conflicting with the possession theory, present mysterious facts which are readily explained only on that theory." (2) The possession is not by the devil, but by demons. Devil is always, in the original, used only as the proper name of the arch-fiend; while in all cases those "possessed" are represented as possessed with *demons*, lesser evil spirits. (3) Demoniacal possession seems to have been always connected with a diseased state, there being certain moral and physical conditions in which demons obtained possession both of the body and of the mind, bringing disease upon the

[1] Robinson's *Harmony of the Gospels.* [2] *Int. Critical Com.* [3] Prof. W. N. Clarke.

29 And behold, they [v] cried out, saying, [w] What have we to do with thee, Je'sus, [x] thou Son of God? art thou come hither to torment us [y] before the time?

v Mark 1. 23, 24, 26. Luke 4. 34. Acts 8. 7. *w* Cp. 2 Sam. 16. 10 & 19. 22 & John 2. 4, *al.* *x* Cp. ch. 4. 3, 6. See ch. 14. 33. *y* Cp. Rev. 12. 12.

former and insanity upon the latter, or intensifying the disease and insanity the victim already had. (4) "Yet 'possession' is distinguished from disease, Mark 1: 32, and other places; and from lunacy (or epilepsy), Matt. 4: 24." So far as I am aware, physicians of the insane are inclined to see only disease in the modern cases which closely resemble the cases described in the New Testament. But there is an unexplainable remainder in them, which they have been unable to account for. "To the frequent objection, How comes it that similar possessions do not occur at the present day? it may be answered, How is it known that they do not occur even now? We cannot prove the negative."[1] (5) "The demoniac stood in a totally different position from the abandoned wicked man, who morally is given over to the devil. This latter would be a subject for punishment, but the demoniac for deepest compassion."[2] While the possession does not imply that the victim was the worst of men, like Judas when "Satan entered into him," or Ananias when "Satan filled his heart," yet at some point the victim must have yielded to the tempter, as Faust to Mephistopheles; for the soul is a castle which Satan cannot enter without permission from within. (6) Yet "lavish sin, and especially indulgence in sensual lusts, superinducing, as it would often, a weakness in the nervous system, which is the especial bond between body and soul, may have laid open these unhappy ones to the fearful incursions of the powers of darkness."[2] It is probable that this condition never occurs except in morally disordered persons. "The men of that time (St. Bernard's) say that the air swarmed with angels; and if not with angels, then with devils; that armies of evil spirits were ever on the wing, that they encamped in invisible companies to waylay and deceive, or counsel and succor the sons of men."[3]

Dr. Edersheim holds that the demoniac influence was not permanent, but rather in paroxysms, and "during the period of their temporary liberty, the demonized might have shaken themselves free from the overshadowing power, or sought release from it." Dean Trench quotes the following: "In accesses of *delirium tremens*, the penalty of lavish indulgence in intoxicating drinks, we find something analogous to this double consciousness. The victim of this 'in his most tranquil and collected moments is not to be trusted; for the transition from that state to the greatest violence is instantaneous: he is often recalled by a word to an apparent state of reason, but as quickly his false impressions return; *there is sometimes evidence at the time of a state of double consciousness*, a condition of mind which is sometimes remembered by the patient when the paroxysm is over.'"[4]

Modern Examples. Dr. Nevius, for forty years a missionary in China, has given his observations in a book lately published. He sent a series of inquiries to Protestant missionaries and Chinese Christians, with the result that he found the almost exact counterpart of the Gospel accounts, recorded by them, as well as observed by himself. (1) The victim "during the paroxysms sometimes falls to the ground senseless, or foams at the mouth, presenting symptoms similar to those of epilepsy or hysteria." (2) "The duration of the abnormal state varies from a few minutes to several days." (3) "When normal consciousness is restored after one of these attacks, the subject is entirely ignorant of everything which took place during that state." (4) "The most striking characteristic of these cases is that the subject evidences another personality, and the normal personality for the time being is partially or wholly dormant." (5) "The new personality presents traits of character utterly different from those which really belong to the subject in his normal state, and this change of character is with rare exceptions in the direction of moral obliquity and impurity." (6) "Many persons while demon-possessed give evidence of knowledge which cannot be accounted for in ordinary ways. They often appear to know the Lord Jesus Christ as a divine person, and show an aversion to and fear of him." (7) "Many cases have been cured by prayer to Christ or in his name." "So far as we have been able to discover, this method of cure has not failed in any case."[5]

29. **And . . . they**, running to him from afar, and prostrating themselves before him (Mark),

[1] Prof. W. N. Clarke.
[2] Dean Alford. [3] Morison.
[4] Bright and Addison, on the *Practice of Medicine*, vol. i. p. 262.
[5] *Demon Possession and Allied Themes*, by Dr. Nevius pp. 143-145. The scientific *Society for Psychical Research* is gradually gathering facts which will throw fresh light on this subject. R. F. Horton's *Cartoons of St. Mark*. Andrew White, ex-president of Cornell University, has a chapter on "Demoniacal Possessions," in *New Chapters in the Conflict of Science and Religion*. He denies the reality of demon possession.

30 And Now there was a good way afar off from them an a herd of many swine feeding.
31 So And the devils besought him, saying, If thou cast us out, suffer us to go send us away into the herd of swine.
32 And he said unto them, Go. And when they were come came out, they and went into the herd of swine: and behold, the whole herd of swine ran violently rushed down a the steep place into the sea, and perished in the waters.

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cried out, with a loud voice (Luke), **What have we** (the unclean spirits representing the whole body of evil spirits) **to do with thee**? Why do you interfere with us? **Jesus, thou son of God.** They belonging to the invisible world recognized him, and his nature and power. As a part of the principality of evil warring against God and good, they were aware of the massing of the divine forces at this time in the world, and that Jesus was irrevocably opposed to them and their terrible work of ruin to man, body and soul. **Art thou come hither to torment us?** for Jesus had told the unclean spirits to come out and leave them (Mark). "They seemed afraid lest they should be driven from their home in the man and sent homeless into the abyss, **before the time**, before the final victory of Christ over the world, when all which belong unto the kingdom of darkness shall be shut up in the abyss (Rev. 20: 10), when all power of harming shall be taken away from them." "Herein the true devilish spirit speaks out, which counts it a torment not to be suffered to torment others, and an injury done to itself when it is no more permitted to be injurious to others." [1]

In Mark we are told that Jesus asked the man his name, probably to help him to understand himself, and realize the distinction between himself and the power that was holding him in thrall, and thus help him to break away from the terrible alliance.[2] The reply of the chief one was that his name was "Legion, for we are many." A Roman legion numbered 6000, but it came to mean, as with us, a large number, a host. "He had seen the thick and serried ranks of a Roman legion, that fearful instrument of oppression, that sign of terror and fear to the conquered nations. Even such, terrible in their strength, inexorable in their hostility, were the 'lords many,' which had dominion over him." Then the demons asked Jesus not to send them out of the country. Luke says, "Into the abyss," Gehenna, the place of evil spirits. The petition of the devils may be regarded as equivalent to "Send us anywhere; anywhere but to perdition. Send us to the most shattered man; send us to the lowest creature, into man or beast, bird or reptile; anywhere but into hell!"

30. **There was a good way off**, at the foot of the mountains (Mark), **an herd of many swine feeding**, about 2000 (Mark). "We are surprised at first to find swine kept in a country where their flesh could not be an article of food. But though the Jews did not eat pork, Roman soldiers did (it was, indeed, their staple article of food), and the swine may have been kept to supply the wants of the legion with which the man was familiar. The well-known pun of Augustus in reference to Herod's murder of his children, 'that it was better to be Herod's sow (*ὗν*) than his son,' (*υἱόν*) seems to imply that the king kept them on his estates for some such purpose." [3] Dr. Thomson says that to this day the region is the habitat of wild hogs.

31. **Suffer us to go away into the herd of swine.** This they asked naturally enough, from their love of uncleanliness as well as to gratify their *destructive* passion.[4] How demons could enter into swine we do not know, but it is no more of a mystery than the connection of mind with body in us. "There is no scientific objection to demoniacal possession of brutes." [5]

32. **He said unto them, Go**, *i. e.*, do as you wish; I will not hinder you.

The question is asked whether Jesus had a right to permit the destruction of so much property belonging to other people. (1) Jesus did not send them, he only did not prevent them. (2) "A visible effect of the departure of the demons was necessary to convince the demoniacs and their neighbors of the reality of the cure." [6] When the men saw the effects that the demons had wrought on them, transferred to the swine, they could be sure that they themselves were delivered from their power. (3) It was probably a gain to the Gadarenes themselves. What was a farm worth that was exposed to the depredations of two such fierce and terrible persons? It was a moral gain for them to learn the lesson that one soul saved was worth more than a herd of swine. It was an object lesson of the evil of sin, and the value of the soul. Any community which learns those lessons is on the highroad to prosperity. Moreover the miracle published throughout the whole region that Jesus of Nazareth, the great Prophet and Redeemer, had come to them with

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[1] Trench.
[2] So Prof. Gould in *Int. Crit. Com.*
[3] Plumptre.
[4] Jacobus.
[5] *Int. Crit. Com. on Luke.*
[6] *Int. Crit. Com.*

33 And they that kept [fed] them fled, and went their ways [away] into the city, and told every thing, [everything,] and what was befallen to them that were [z] possessed of the [with] devils.

34 And behold, all the whole city came out to meet Jē'sus: and when they saw him, [a] they besought *him* that he would depart out of their coasts. [from their borders.]

z ver. 16. *a* Cp. 1 Kin. 17. 18 & Luke 5. 8 & Acts 16. 39.

power to save from all sin. What were 2000 swine to 2000 souls who should hear the invitation to come and be saved? (4.) If the owners were Jews, and no one knows that they were not, they were breaking their own divine law for the sake of making money, and they were thus undermining their religion, and hastening the national destruction. Jesus had the same right, as a prophet, not to prevent this destruction, as he had to drive out the cattle from the temple, and interfere with the moneychangers there. It was a call to repentance.

If the owners were heathen, who by their practices were undermining Judaism, it was right to permit evil to have its own reward. It was like permitting the natural results of oppression or intemperance or dishonesty to come upon a people. And really, as we have seen, it was a gain to them of that which was highest and best.

The whole herd of swine ran violently down a steep place into the sea. Not over a cliff, but a steep beach. "It does not say that it was a high place, but steep, and that they ran (not fell) down this into the sea. There are several steeps near the sea here, but only one so close to the water as to make it sure that if a herd ran violently down, they would go into the sea. Here, for a full half mile, the beach is of a form different from any other round the lake, and from any that I have noticed in any lake or sea before. It is flat until close to the edge. There a hedge of oleanders fringes the end of the plain, and immediately below these is a gravel beach inclined so steep that when my boat was at the shore I could not see over the top even by standing up; while the water alongside is so deep that it covered my paddle (seven feet long) when dipped vertically a few feet from the shore. Now if the swine rushed along this short plain toward this hedge of underwood (and their usual feeding-place would be often among thick brushwood of this kind), they would instantly pass through the shrubs and then down the steep gravel beyond into the deep water, where they would surely be drowned." [1]

Perished in the waters. "Perhaps the act of the swine was the result of panic, and in spite of the evil spirits. It is the very nature of evil thus to outwit itself." [2] "Stupid, blind, self-contradicting and suicidal, it can only destroy, and will rather involve itself in the common ruin than not destroy." [3] But the man was delivered from the power of the evil that had possessed him. He was clothed and in his right mind, sane and natural, and sitting quietly at rest.

33. **And they that kept them fled.** Their occupation was gone, they were thoroughly frightened, and it was necessary that they should report what had been done, or they would be punished for carelessness.

34. **The whole city**, the little city of Gersa. **Came out to meet Jesus.** These strange events would naturally create a great excitement. **And when they saw him**, they were afraid (Mark), and **besought him that he would depart out of their coasts**, borders. They felt they were in the presence of an awful power, the extent of which they knew not. They were afraid Jesus might exert his power in other ways to their injury, even if it were for their spiritual good. Their consciences were awakened, and they feared that Jesus might send upon them the punishment they knew they deserved. Jesus was an agitator, a disturber of settled wrongs. It is one of two things when Christ comes into a place: it is deadly fear, or infinite rejoicing. Thus the people rejected the salvation which Jesus brought to them.

As Jesus and his disciples were leaving, the redeemed man wanted to leave the scene so filled with terrible memories, and go with Jesus. But Jesus would not permit it, and bade him go home and tell his friends what great things God had done for him. In the very places where his former state was best known, and the marvellous change could be best appreciated, he was to proclaim the gospel of salvation. His greatest power for good was in testifying to the facts, in bearing witness to the love and power of Jesus, as he had felt them. We can do little effective work in preaching the gospel, except so far as we have experienced it.

The greatest need was among these people who were so far away from the kingdom that they rejected Jesus, and were without his further presence. He himself needed just this work for his own salvation and growth in grace. It was better than even going around with Jesus himself.

[1] Macgregor, *Rob Roy on the Jordan*, p. 411. [2] Abbott. [3] Trench.

PRACTICAL SUGGESTIONS.

1. A Picture of the Fruit of Sin is presented as an object lesson by this demoniac. He is a specimen of what Satan desires to do to those who yield to him.[1] His name is Legion, — a host, organized so that each force of evil aids the dire influence of the others.

2. A Sign. In the cure we have an object lesson of the transformation which Jesus works for men by transplanting them into his kingdom, as charcoal into diamond, or rags into paper whereon can be written the noblest truths and the richest virtues. "John Chrysostom ingeniously remarks that the animals which went out of Noah's ark went out the same as they came in. The crow went out a crow; the wolf, a wolf; the fox, a fox. 'But the church transforms the animals she receives into her bosom, not by any change in their substance, but by the extirpation of their sin.' The magic wand of a Circe formerly metamorphosed men into brutes; but the Divine Word changes the brutes into true men. Yea, more than this; it changes them into angels (Isai. 11: 6–9; 1 Cor. 6: 9–11)."[2]

3. The Redeemed Man. What He gave up. (1) He gave up the evil spirit which possessed him. (2) His unnatural and evil life. (3) His uncleanness. (4) His rags and poverty. (5) His homeless wanderings, his wretchedness, his restlessness. (6) His deeds of violence and sin.

What He received. (1) A right and reasonable mind. (2) The comforts of clothing and a home. (3) Good friends, and especially the Lord Jesus himself. (4) Rest and peace. (5) An honorable and useful career, in proclaiming to many the Saviour of men.

4. Some Illustrations of Prayers answered. The evil spirits were granted their request, but it resulted in their ruin, and not as they expected. "We, ignorant of ourselves, beg often our own harms." The Gadarenes had their desire granted. Jesus left them, and never returned, so far as we learn. Their decision was final. Jesus came to them in spite of sea and storm, and demons, and their own sins, but he would not stay where he was not wanted; though he did the best possible for them, in his good deed to the demoniac, and in leaving him to declare his experience. This might open the door to the Gospel. Nothing but our own wills can hinder our salvation. Only our own hands can lock the doors of heaven against us.

On the other hand, the request of the restored demoniac was denied because God had better things for him than he had asked. He was denied copper, that he might receive gold; denied charcoal, that he might possess diamonds.

5. Like many a man to-day, these Gadarenes rejected the Son of God, their Saviour, their Redeemer, because he interfered with their bad business. They were unwilling to suffer some loss that they might win holiness, happiness, and heaven. "Carnal hearts prefer their swine before their Saviour, and had rather lose Christ's presence than their worldly profit." These men rejected Jesus while they knew but little about him. They did not wait for instruction, for larger knowledge of his works and words. Jesus left the cured man among them so that possibly a fuller knowledge and more thought might open their hearts to better things. "To me it is specially appalling that a man should perish through wilfully rejecting the divine salvation. A drowning man throwing away the life-belt, a poisoned man pouring the antidote upon the floor, a wounded man tearing open his wounds, — any one of these is a sad sight; but what shall we say of a soul putting from it the Redeemer and choosing its own destruction?"[3]

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[1] See for illustrations Plato's description of the marine Glaucus, *Republic*, X. 11. The Norse legend of the man pursued by a troll, in the preface to Hall Caine's *The Bondman*.

[2] *Choice Notes.* [3] Spurgeon.

CHAPTER 9.

Five Miracles, and a Summary of Many Others.

Section VIII. — A GROUP OF MIRACLES (*continued*).

1. A Case of Paralysis; the Man borne of Four, vers. 1–8.
2. The Call of Matthew, ver. 9.
3. The Banquet and Reception at Matthew's House, vers. 10–17.
4. Restoration of the Dead; Jairus' Daughter, vers. 18–26.
5. The Issue of Blood, vers. 20–22.
6. Blindness cured; Two Blind Men, vers. 27–31.
7. Demons cast out; the Dumb possessed, vers. 32–34.
8. Many Diseases cured, ver. 35.
9. A Call for more Laborers, vers. 36–38.

Time.

Summer and Autumn, A. D. 28.

Place.

Galilee, chiefly in the vicinity of the Sea of Galilee.

1 And he entered into a ship, boat, and passed crossed over, and came into his [b] own city.
2 [c] And, behold, they brought to him a man sick of the palsy, lying on a bed: and Jē'sus [d] seeing their faith said unto the sick of the palsy, Son, [e] be of good cheer; [f] thy sins be are forgiven. thee.

b ch. 4. 13. Cp. Mark 2. 1. *c* For vers. 2–8, see Mark 2. 3–12 & Luke 5. 18–26. *d* ver. 22, 29. ch. 8. 10, 13 & 15. 28. Mark 10. 52. Luke 7. 9, 50 & 17. 19 & 18. 42. Acts 3. 16 & 14. 9. James 5. 15. *e* ver. 22. *f* Luke 7. 48. Cp. John 5. 14.

1. THE PARALYTIC BORNE OF FOUR, vers. 1–8.

Time. May or June, A. D. 28.

Place. Capernaum, in a private house.

Parallels. Mark 2: 1–12; Luke 5: 17–26.

1. **And he entered into a ship**, or *boat*. The one which had carried them over from Capernaum to the country of the Gadarenes. This verse really belongs to the last chapter, and is entirely separate from the account of the healing of the paralytic. **And passed over** the lake back to **his own city**, Capernaum, where he made his abode.

2. **And, behold.** We now begin a new incident, which took place several weeks before. **They brought to him**, to the house where he was preaching. The word used in Mark implies that he was at home. "Either the house which he occupied with his mother and his brethren (Matt. 4: 13), or possibly that of St. Peter."[1] **A man sick of the palsy.** See on 8: 5–13. **Lying on a bed**, a thin mattress.

The Scene is pictured more fully by Mark and Luke.

We see an Oriental house; perhaps one of the poorer class, which is usually of one story, with a flat roof and outside stairs to the roof, for during the heat of the summer the family always sleep there. It is generally surrounded by battlements. "The roofs are made of branches of trees, canes, palm leaves, etc., covered with a thick stratum of earth."[2] The better houses consist of an open courtyard, in which is frequently a fountain or a well. This is surrounded on three sides by rooms with bare, almost windowless walls on the outside, "with a narrow doorway in the centre opening into the courtyard, to which there is no other access. Round three sides of this open square are attached chambers, sometimes wholly or partially enclosed, sometimes with only pillars supporting the roof, between which curtains may be hung. The principal or reception room is on the side facing the entrance."

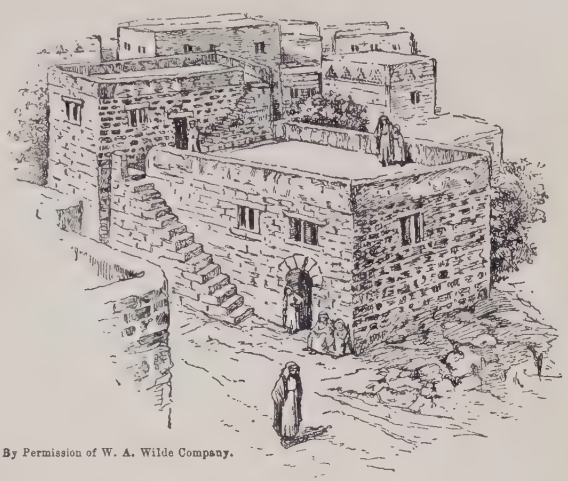
We see here gathered a great number of people thronging the house with Oriental freedom, crowding and pressing around the doors in their eagerness to hear the young teacher and miracle worker, who was creating no little excitement. Among them were leading Pharisees and learned

[1] Cambridge Bible.

[2] Prof. J. D. Davis, *Bib. Dic.*

men from all parts of Galilee and as far away as Judea and Jerusalem.

We see Jesus preaching to these crowds, either in the central room or under the covered veranda, and not only preaching, but healing (Luke). It was an informal meeting. During the services four men came to the house carrying a paralytic man on his bed to be cured by Jesus. Some one has called them, The First Christian Endeavor Society. They were unable to enter the house on account of the crowds. But they were enterprising and ingenious, and undiscouraged they carried the sick man up the outside stairs upon the low roof of the house; they had broken a hole through the roof of branches and earth, and taking the mattress by the four corners let the man down among the audience in front of Jesus. The roof was so low that those below could receive the man from the hands of the four on the roof. "The whole affair was the extemporaneous device of plain peasants, accustomed to open their roofs, and let down grain, straw, and other articles, as they still do in this country. I have often seen it done, and done it myself to houses in Lebanon. I have the impression, however, that the covering, at least of the *lewan* (court), was not made of earth, but of coarse matting . . . or boards . . . or stone slabs that could be quickly removed." [1]



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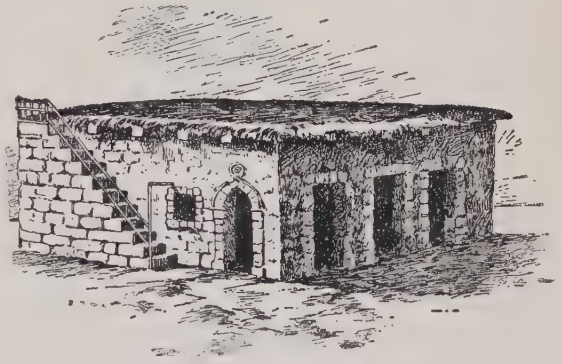

Eastern Houses, showing the flat roofs and outside stairs.

And Jesus seeing their faith, shown by coming to him, and by their persistence in overcoming obstacles. All five showed faith in this way. But Jesus looked down into the sick man's heart, and saw a true faith beyond all desire to be restored to health. R. Glover lays the most stress on the sick man's faith, as the source and bulwark of the faith of the four. "Christ's treatment of the man shows that it was he who had the faith, and had imparted it to them. There are no sufferers whose affliction has been hallowed who are not centres of spiritual influence to some friends or neighbors round them."

Son (a word of loving endearment), **be of good cheer**, take heart, **thy sins be** (are) **forgiven thee**. Jesus grants him the greater blessing first, not only for his own sake, because he desired it most, or at least was the blessing he most needed, but also as an impressive lesson to his hearers on the higher value of spiritual healing. "Nothing is said about the man's character, or about his previous life, or the cause of his illness. But there comes before my mind a fact of a young man barely twenty-one, lying in precisely the condition that is here described, unable to move a limb, the result simply of his youthful debaucheries. And one would gather from the unexpected course which Jesus pursues with this young man that he suspected a similar cause in this case of illness . . . and puts his finger upon the spring of the mischief." [2] If such was the cause of the sickness, Jesus well knew that there could be no permanent or valuable healing without repentance and forsaking of the sin. It is probable that he had been led to repentance before this, and to a

[1] Thomson, *Land and Book.*

[2] R. F. Horton, *Cartoons of St. Mark.*

3 And behold, certain of the scribes said within themselves, [g] This man blasphemeth.

4 And Jē'sus [h] knowing their thoughts said, Wherefore think ye evil in your hearts?

5 For whether is easier, to say, Thy sins be forgiven; thee; or to say, Arise, and walk?

g ch. 26. 65. John 10. 36. *h* ch. 12. 25. Luke 6. 8 & 9. 47 (for mg.). John 2. 24, 25.

longing for redemption from his past sin and the foreboding of the future.

The fruits of sin cause the essential evil of sin to be felt.

"I sat alone with my conscience
In a place where time had ceased,
And we talked of my former living
In the land where the years increased.
The ghosts of forgotten actions
Came floating before my sight,
And things that I thought were dead things
Were alive with a terrible might;
The vision of all my past life
Was an awful thing to face,
Alone with my conscience sitting
In that silently solemn place."

THE FORGIVENESS OF SINS. (1) The first great need of each human being is the forgiveness of sins. A religion that cannot assure us of God's forgiveness is a vain religion. (2) This is so because unforgiven sin shuts us away from God and heaven. We could not look in God's face, or endure his presence, or the presence of the holy, with our sins unforgiven. (3) Forgiveness is not merely the taking away of the punishment of sin, but it is restoration to the family of God, to his favor, to the enjoyment of his love, as children and heirs of God. (4) Forgiveness includes the washing away of sin. It will be remembered no more. The past life will be seen in the radiance of God's love, which will make us forget the sin in admiration of God's goodness, and mercy, and love, in the salvation of such as we are. (5) Sin is forgiven for Christ's sake, because he has by his atonement made it possible for God to be just, and yet justify (forgive) those who believe. The atonement removes the evil which would come upon the individual and upon the community if free pardon were offered to all, without this preparation and condition.

3. **And, behold, certain of the scribes.** "The scribes, or Rabbis, were the leaders of the nations, the theologians, the legislators, the politicians of Israel."[1] Pharisees joined with them, being strictly attached to the letter of the law. **Said within themselves.** Luke uses a word that means "they held a dialogue with themselves." **This man blasphemeth,** "for who can forgive sins but God alone?" To blaspheme is to slander God, to speak evil, impiously, of God. In this case it was arrogating to himself what belonged only to God, thus making God like a mere man. Blasphemy is practically *uttered* treason against God and his kingdom. It was a capital crime, the one for which in his trial he was condemned to die. The blasphemy consisted in an ordinary man claiming to do what in the nature of things God only can do, thus practically claiming that he is God. For sins, as distinguished from crimes, are against God, and therefore only God can forgive them; for in the nature of things only he against whom the offence has been committed can forgive. I can forgive the evil done to myself, but I cannot forgive the evil done to my neighbor. He only can forgive that. So that the reasoning of the scribes was right: "Only God can forgive sins." But they did not apply it aright.

4. **Jesus knowing their thoughts,** whether by their actions, or by his insight into the human heart. **Wherefore think ye evil.** Why do you misjudge and put an evil construction on my words? How do you know that I was not merely declaring what I knew to be true? But that the other alternative is true I will prove to you.

5. **For whether is easier, to say,** etc. "In our Lord's argument it must be carefully noted that he does not ask *which is easier, to forgive sins* or *to raise a sick man;* for it could not be affirmed that that of forgiving is easier than this of healing; but which is easier to *claim, this power or that; to say,* Thy sins be forgiven thee, or *to say,* Arise and walk? . . . It would be easier for a man equally ignorant of the French and Chinese languages to claim to know the last than the first. Not that the language itself is easier, but that in the one case multitudes could disprove his claim; in the other, hardly a scholar or two in the land." Saying, "Thy sins be forgiven thee," could not be put to the proof. But the saying, "Arise and walk," could be tested on the spot. Both were divine acts. He that could do one divine act proved that he had authority and power to do the other.

[1] Geikie.

6 But that ye may know that the Son of man hath power on earth to forgive sins' (then saith he to the sick of the palsy'), Arise, and take up thy bed, and go unto thine (thy) house.

7 And he arose, and departed to his house.

8 But when the multitudes saw *it*, they *i* marvelled, (were afraid,) and *i* glorified God, which had *j* given such power unto men.

9 ¶ *k* And as Jē'sus passed forth (by) from thence, he saw a man, named (called) *l* Măt'thew, sitting at the receipt of custom: (place of toll:) and he saith unto him, Follow me. And he arose, and followed him.

i See Luke 7. 16. *j* ch. 28. 18. *k* For vers. 9–17, see Mark 2. 14–22 & Luke 5. 27–38. *l* ch. 10. 3. Mark 3. 18. Luke 6. 15. Acts 1. 13.

6. **But that ye may know that the Son of man**, a title accepted by the Jews as that of the Messiah, the ideal man, "the head and representative of the new humanity," the Son of God manifested in the flesh. **Hath power on earth.** Both right and might, authority and power. The proof lies in the indorsement of God to Jesus' claims to be the Messiah. The miracle was the signature of God to his nature and mission.

Arise. Which would be impossible without a miracle. **Take up thy bed.** This would show the completeness of the cure on the spot, which would be impossible if the cure were a medical result.

7. **And he arose**, and took up his bed, and in the presence of the assembly (Mark), **departed to his house**, a living, unimpeachable witness to Jesus that he was the Messiah, doing precisely what the Messiah naturally would do.

8. **When the multitudes saw it, they marvelled.** Luke adds, "They were filled with fear." The miracle awakened a religious awe in their minds, such as men ever feel in the presence of a great and mysterious power. Here was one who could read their hearts; and who would not be afraid if every secret thought were about to be brought to light? Here was one also who had unlimited power; what might he not do to them? But they also saw the goodness of God; his forgiving love; his readiness to help; and this, too, for the sinful and helpless. This was the most amazing thing of all. **And glorified God.** Luke adds, "saying, We have seen strange things today." They ascribed the honor and glory to God, as the source of this beneficent power. The good deeds of God's children honor God, and lead the souls of men toward him (Matt. 5: 16).

II. THE CALL OF MATTHEW; THE EVOLUTION OF A MAN, ver. 9.

TIME. Early Summer, A. D. 28, after healing the paralytic.

PLACE. From Capernaum to the seaside.

PARALLELS. Mark 2: 13, 14; Luke 5: 27, 28.

9. **And as Jesus passed forth from thence**, from the house where he had been preaching and curing the paralytic, and from the city to the seashore (Mark). He probably went northeast toward the mouth of the Jordan. The crowds followed him, and he taught them. The seashore was a favorite place with Jesus for his teaching, with more room and more favorable surroundings than could be found in the city. He was moving along the shore (Mark), when **he saw** (Luke says, "looked attentively at, contemplated as if reading his character"[1]) **a man named Matthew.** Luke calls him Levi. His father's name was Alphæus, of whom nothing further is known. "Either he had originally two names, as was not uncommon among the Jews, or he received the name of Matthew when he became a Christian, as Simon did that of Peter."[2] Matthew was a Jew and a publican, with his home in Capernaum. Matthew in Hebrew has the same meaning as Theodore in Greek, — "the gift of God." The new name, as in the case of Peter, expressed his new life, as Jacob, "the supplanter," was changed with his changed character to Israel, "a prince of God." So one of the rewards of the conqueror is a new name, the name of God and of the holy city (Rev. 3: 12). **Sitting at the receipt of custom.** Toll house ("tolbooth," in Edinburgh), or custom house, for the collection of the taxes on fish, or duties on the merchandise which passed along the great roads to Jerusalem, Tyre, and Damascus, and the East, which centred at Capernaum. The Romans taxed heavily almost everything, every tree, every house, every door, every column, all property, real or personal. Cicero speaks of the toll houses erected by the publicans, "at the approaches to bridges, at the termination of roads, or in the harbors," for convenience of collection.

THE PUBLICANS. Our word "publican" comes from the Latin *publicani*, those who gathered the *publicum*, or public state revenue. Roman knights

[1] *Int. Crit. Com.*

[2] Prof. J. D. Davis, *Bib. Dic.*

were usually at the head of this work, but farmed out the collection of the taxes to under officers, who, in the New Testament, are termed publicans. These were usually "the lowest and worst class of the native population, since no others would assume a task so hateful. They were required to pay over to their superiors the exorbitant sum fixed by the law, and depended for their profit on what they could make by fraud and extortion. They often overcharged, brought false charges of smuggling to extort hush money, seized upon property in case of dispute and held it until their levy was paid, forbade the farmer to reap his standing crops until they had wrung from him all that his penury could produce. They were universally feared, hated, and despised throughout the empire, but nowhere more than in Palestine. They were classed with sinners, with harlots, with heathen, in public estimation, and probably in their actual and customary companionships."[1]

The Character of Matthew before his Call. Matthew was engaged, not in a wicked calling, but in a disreputable one; one which in general was followed by bad men, in wicked ways, and which therefore threw a shadow of suspicion on every one engaged in it. But it is probable that Matthew was not corrupt, just as Zaccheus could not have been like most other publicans, or it would have been impossible for him to have restored fourfold. Mr. Ruskin, in describing a painting of Matthew by Carpaccio, says, "Do not think that Christ would have called a bad or corrupt publican — much less that a bad or corrupt publican would have obeyed the call. . . . Carpaccio knows well that there are no defalcations from Levi's chest, no oppressions in his tax-gathering, . . . but a true 'merchant of Venice uprightest and gentlest of the merchant race.'"[2]

A hint as to the character of Matthew may be gained from the fact that Matthew alone of the gospel writers, in the lists of the apostles, applies to himself the odious title of publican, as if to remind himself and others of the pit from which he was "digged;" while the other evangelists omit this designation, as if they would forget the past in the new life, and would see him as he is, not as he was.

The Call to a Higher Life. **Saith unto him, Follow me**, both in heart as his Saviour, Teacher, and Master, and literally by taking his place among our Lord's constant attendants. Without doubt Matthew knew about Jesus. He had heard his teachings, seen his works, recognized his character and claims. The question as to whether he would become his disciple must have been thought over earnestly before this definite call came. It must have been because Jesus saw in Matthew great possibilities, as one sees the oak in the acorn, that Jesus called him to be a disciple, saying to him, as Ruskin states it: "Come up higher thou, for there are nobler treasures than these to count, and a nobler King than this to render account to. Thou hast been faithful over a few things; enter thou into the joy of thy Lord." "Christ had the double vision of the sculptor," who sees in the rough and shapeless mass of marble the vision of the perfect and noble form that is to be. "The choice of Matthew, as of most of the other apostles, illustrates the power of the gospel to elevate obscure and commonplace lives."

The Cost of Following Jesus. **And he arose, and followed him.** It cost a good deal to accept the call. Luke says that he forsook all, — his business, his gains, his hopes of wealth, his companions, his luxuries. Compare "taking up the cross" (Matt. 10: 38; 16: 24) and "counting the cost" (Luke 14: 27-33). It was the forsaking of a bad business with the remorse of conscience which grew out of it, a disreputable life of disloyalty to his country, great temptations to dishonesty, and bad companionship. The repentant sinner always forsakes many things which it is blessed to leave behind, as the drunkard his cups and his rags, as Bunyan's Pilgrim left behind him the City of Destruction, and the burden of sins on his back.

What his Discipleship did for Him. He left worldly success to gain heavenly success, the real success. He became a better man, and a Christian, and apostle; like the aromatic clay, which was but common clay till it dwelt among the roses. He had higher ideals, a fuller life, a glorious companionship, training in the school of Christ, a wider and better work. Little is known of his after life, but he wrote one of the Gospels, and that alone was blessedness, glory, and immortality.

> "I held it truth, with him who sings
> To one clear harp in divers tones,
> That men may rise on stepping-stones
> Of their dead selves to higher things."

III. THE BANQUET AND RECEPTION AT MATTHEW'S HOUSE; A MEANS OF REACHING THE PUBLICANS, vers. 10-17.

Time. Autumn, A. D. 28.

Place. Capernaum, at Matthew's house.

Parallels. Mark 2: 15-22; Luke 5: 29-39.

Andrews places this some weeks after Matthew's call, on the return from Gergesa to Capernaum (ch. 8: 28; 9: 1). Others place it immediately after the call. Authorities are greatly divided.

[1] Abbott.

[2] Ruskin, *St. Mark's Rest.*

10 ¶ And it came to pass, as Je'sus (he) sat at meat in the house, behold, many
m publicans and sinners came and sat down with him (Je'sus) and his disciples.
11 And when the Phăr'ĭ-sees saw it, they said unto his disciples, *n* Why eateth
your Master with *m* the publicans and sinners?
12 But when Je'sus (he) heard *that* (it), he said, unto them, They that be (are) whole
need not (have no need of) a physician, but they that are sick.
13 But go ye and learn *o* what *that* (this) meaneth, *p* I will have (desire) mercy, and not sacrifice:
for *q* I am (came) not come to call the righteous, *r* but sinners. to repentance.

m ch. 11. 19. Mark 2. 15, 16, *al.* See ch. 5. 46. *n* Cp. Luke 15. 2. *o* ch. 12. 7. *p* Cited from Hos. 6. 6. Cp. ch. 23. 23 & Mark 12. 33. *q* Cp. Luke 15. 7 & John 9. 39. *r* 1 Tim. 1. 15.

10. **As Jesus**, better "he," Matthew, **sat**, was reclining, **at meat**, at a great feast which Matthew made (Luke), **in the house**, Matthew's house, which must have been large to accommodate so many.

Many publicans (see on ver. 9) who followed Jesus more or less (Mark), **and sinners.** Disreputable sinners and outcasts, notorious offenders. The Pharisees were quite as great sinners, but in another way. **Sat down with him**, Jesus. They were invited by Matthew to meet Jesus, probably that they might learn more of the truth from him. It seems to have been an effort of Matthew to bring his old acquaintances and friends into the kingdom of God, through more intimate acquaintance with him and his gospel.

Matthew followed Jesus with his eyes open to see what he could do for the kingdom. As a business man he used wise business methods. It is probable that one reason why Jesus called him to become an apostle was that he might be a means of reaching this very class, showing how the Messiah felt toward them, and putting before them an example of what the Gospel could do for them.[1] Matthew does not disown or despise his old companions, but makes his old acquaintanceship a means of saving them. He seems to have selected for this feast those who were nearest the kingdom. These only would be likely to come. If they came they would get the most good.

11. **And when the Pharisees.** Who were also scribes (Mark), the authorized teachers of the law. They were a large and influential sect of Jews, who prided themselves on the strictness with which they kept the ceremonial law. They were like whited sepulchres and dishes washed on the outside, but full of all uncleanness within (see Matt. 23: 23–28; Luke 11: 39–42). **Saw it.** The Pharisees were not guests, but freely came into the house and looked on, according to the custom of the East. **Said unto his disciples**, who were probably nearer. And it was easier to criticise Jesus to his disciples than to the face of the Master himself.

Why eateth your Master with publicans and sinners? Eating and drinking was a covenant of friendship. "The substance of their charge was not that he *taught* sinners, but that he *ate* with them, that is, mingled with them on terms of social equality."[2] They thought that "like seeks like," and "a man is known by the company he keeps;" that something must be wrong with a teacher who consorted with such people instead of with the cultured scribes and wealthy and honored Pharisees.[3]

12. **When Jesus heard that.** He either overheard their words, or the disciples reported them. **He said unto them.** He made three answers to their criticism, one from analogy (ver. 12), one from the Scriptures (ver. 13), and a third from a statement of the object of his mission (ver. 13, last clause). **They that be whole.** Strong, healthy, hale, as the Pharisees imagined they were morally. It is only **they that are sick** who need a physician. So that the very things on account of which the Pharisees objected and found fault with Jesus were the reason why he should go among publicans and sinners. He was the physician of the soul, and went where the sin-sick were, and to those who felt the need of spiritual healing.

13. **But go ye** to the Scriptures, with which the scribes were familiar; but they often know more about the husk than the corn, the shell of the nut than the meat. **And learn.** Get at the real meaning. **What that meaneth.** He quotes from Hosea 6: 6. Compare its spirit in 1 Sam. 15: 22; Ps. 50: 8–15; Isai. 1: 11–17; Amos 5: 21–24. **I will have**, I wish in my people, **mercy**, deeds of kindness to those in need, pity and help for the sinful, **and not sacrifice**, the external forms of religion, without the heart and the deeds they signify. **For I am not come to call the righteous**, those who are already good, **but sinners, to repentance**, for they need the call. The

[1] Poem, "Beautiful Snow," in the *Snow-flake Album.*
[2] Abbott.
[3] See Mary E. Atkinson's poem, "My Neighbor," in her volume of poems, *The Architect of Cologne.*

14 ¶ Then [came / come] to him the [s] disciples of Jŏhn, saying, [t] Why do we and [u] the Phăr′ĭ-sees fast oft, but thy disciples fast not?

15 And Jē′sus said unto them, [v] Can the [children / sons] of the [bridechamber / bride-chamber] mourn, as long as the bridegroom is with them? but [w] the days will come, when the bridegroom shall be taken away from them, and [x] then [shall / will] they fast.

s ch. 11. 2 & 14. 12. Luke 11. 1. John 1. 35 & 3. 25 & 4. 1. Cp. Acts 18. 25 & 19. 3. *t* Cp. ch. 15. 2. *u* Luke 18. 12. *v* John 3. 29. *w* See Luke 17. 22. *x* Cp. John 16. 20.

contrast is not between Pharisees and publicans, but between two kinds of character. By going among the publicans Jesus was accomplishing his mission, the very thing the Pharisees themselves ought to have been doing. They were neglecting their business, and needed this sharp rebuke.[1]

PRACTICAL SUGGESTIONS.

1. No one can do good work for men and not be criticised. We must not expect to fare better than our Master. But we must be careful to have good reasons for what we do.

2. It is an evil habit to be ever looking for faults in others, misreading and caricaturing their conduct. Habitual faultfinders are worse than those they find fault with. Hogarth, the great satirist, once said: "Take my advice, and never draw caricature. By the long practice of it I have lost the enjoyment of beauty; I never see a face but distorted, and have never the satisfaction to behold the human face divine."

3. Christ is our example in social life. We are to make friends even of outcasts, using our social power to lift them up, and never joining with them in their sins. We are to go as physicians, and not as accomplices or approvers. "Such are among the few who sailed down the sewers like swans, their snowy plumes unsoiled by all the defilement." A missionary at work among the heathen, or in the most degraded portions of our cities, is safe. Yea, he grows better all the time. Sunshine is not defiled by shining upon filth, and taking the deadliness out of it. Degraded sin repels. There is far more danger to most Christians from the worldliness of the Pharisees, from the reputable and fashionable evildoers, than from the degraded and the outcasts.

4. This, too, should be the method of the church. It is to go where it is needed. It is to seek and to save the lost, or it will lose the spirit and power of its Master.[2] "You cannot elevate, you cannot improve, any whom you utterly despise. You cannot bring the best out of a man if you do not believe that the best is somewhere in him. . . . If souls do not shine before you it is because you bring them no light to make them shine. Throw away your miserable, smouldering, fuming torch of conceit and hatred, lift up to them the light of love, and lo! they will arise and shine; yea, flame and burn with an undreamt-of glory."[3]

5. This was all the more important because of the many obstacles in the way of the publicans becoming Christians. (1) They were exposed to very great temptations to crimes for which there was no punishment. (2) Their past life lowered their standard of morality and debased their character. (3) Their past became a hindrance by taking away the hope of being and doing better. They were outcasts, and the better society did not welcome them, but repressed every desire to be better. The brand of their profession was on them. The Cain mark was plain upon their foreheads.[4]

QUESTION OF JOHN'S DISCIPLES. 14. **Then came to him**, while the feast and the discourse were going on, **the disciples of John** the Baptist. The feast was probably taking place on one of the traditional fast days, Mondays and Thursdays; for according to Mark 2:18, R. V., these disciples of John were fasting at this time, and the contrast between the feasting of Jesus and his disciples and the fasting of the hungry onlookers naturally called out the question, **Why do we and the Pharisees fast oft, but thy disciples fast not?** Why are your disciples less religious? Why do they not realize the evils of the time and the oppressions of the nation, and humble themselves before God? For *fasting* see on 6:16–18.

15. **And Jesus said.** The reply was by a familiar illustration. **Can the children of the bridechamber.** The bridegroom's friends, who conducted the bride from her father's house to her future home, amid festivities and rejoicings, to the marriage feast. **Mourn, as long as the bridegroom is with them?** It was wholly incongruous, and could be only a form. It was now

[1] Read Ruskin's interpretation, in *Sesame and Lilies*, of "Blind Mouths," an expression found in Milton's *Lycidas*.

[2] Longfellow's "Legend Beautiful," in *Tales of a Wayside Inn*.

[3] Canon Farrar.

[4] See Robertson's *Sermons*, vol. i., Sermon 5, on "Zaccheus;" Tennyson's *Poems*, "The Vision of Sin."

16 And no man putteth a piece of new undressed cloth unto upon an old garment; for that which is put in to should fill it up taketh from the garment, and the rent is made worse. a worse rent is made.
17 Neither do men put new wine into old bottles: wine-skins: else the bottles break, skins burst, and the wine runneth out, is spilled, and the bottles skins perish: but they put new wine into new bottles, fresh wine-skins, and both are preserved.

y Josh. 9. 4. Job 32. 19 (mg.). Ps. 119. 83 (mg.).

a time of rejoicing, and their conduct and religious life should agree thereto. It would be a moral discord to fast at the wedding feast.

But the days will come, etc. At Jesus' death they will feel like mourning, so sad and troubled that fasting will be the natural expression of their hearts. And there will come other times in their history when fasting will be fitting because the Bridegroom seems far away.

New Methods for New Times. Jesus continues his reply by a general principle, of which his answer to their question about fasting was one application. But many more applications were to appear in the progress of the grafting of the new kingdom of God upon the old. This principle would help the disciples in many a difficult question in the future, and all down the ages.

16. **No man putteth a piece of new cloth**, unfulled, unshrunk, rather than "undressed," as in R. V., which is an unfamiliar, manufacturer's term. But the cloth, just as finished as it ever would be, would yet shrink in the wearing unless it were sponged and shrunk, — a familiar experience. **Unto an old garment**, as a patch. **Taketh from the garment**, etc. The patch, exactly fitting the rent in the old garment, would shrink more and more, till the older and weaker cloth gave way under the intense strain, and the rent became much larger than before.

17. **Neither do men.** None are so foolish. **Put new wine into old bottles**, wine-skins, bottles made of the skins of animals, from which the body is withdrawn, leaving the skin whole, except the neck, which becomes the mouth of the bottle, and the legs, which are tied up. "Our word 'bottle' originally carried the true meaning, being a bottle of leather. In Spanish *bota* means a *leather bottle*, a *boot*, and a *butt*. In Spain wine is still brought to market in pig-skins. In the East, goat-skins are commonly used."[1] **Else the bottles break**, by the pressure of the gases produced by the process of fermentation upon leather weakened and cracked by age. A prominent brewer says that the pressure of champagne in glass bottles after nine months is equal to sixty pounds to the square inch. Probably some of the gases evaporate through the wineskins, and make the pressure less.

The life of a seed is good for a seed, but it can never become a tree till it breaks away from its old shell and form and lets its life take on new forms. The life in the egg must continue in the

Skin Bottles.

bird. The life of the caterpillar must take the form of the butterfly, — the same life in new forms. Compare, also, the changes in warfare, in lighting, in travel, in manufacturing.

Arab Water-carrier.

The life in all these cases is preserved by the change of form, as **new wine in new bottles.** The religious life is not destroyed by changing its form, but is preserved. A false conservatism means death, not conservation. It is simply suicide. But all changes are not good, only those which the new life requires.

Applications to Early Times. The old garment and wine-skin represent the old Jewish dispensation, with its sacrifices and ceremonies, its national laws and regulations. The garment

[1] Prof. M. R. Vincent.

18 ¶ [z] While he spake these things unto them, behold, there came a certain ruler, and [a] worshipped him, saying, My daughter is even now dead: but come and lay thy hand upon her, and she shall live.

19 And Jē'sus arose, and followed him, and *so did* his disciples.

z For vers. 18–26, see Mark 5. 22–43 & Luke 8. 41–56. *a* See ch. 8. 2.

represents outward forms; the wine, that which is within, the inward spirit. Both were best for their purpose in their time. But the new life and spirit of the Gospel, with its freedom, its hope, its sacrifice on the cross, its new leader, and new light and love, must break away from the old forms, and do its work by new methods, new teachings, and in a new spirit. That which was the object of each form was preserved in the new. There was a spiritual transformation, as of the Sabbath when it became the Lord's Day. We see examples all through the Acts and Epistles. The controversy about the reception of the Gentiles was one example. The new meeting places instead of the old synagogues; the sacrifice of Christ instead of the sacrifices in the temple; the new church officers; the new forms of worship; the new methods of spreading the kingdom; the new conditions of entering it.

Applications to Modern Times. The same principle still holds true. Every new influx of life and light needs new channels in which to flow, new forms in which to embody itself. It is the same spirit, the same great truths, the same old Gospel, in new forms and working in new methods. If we give our religious life freedom, it will take on the right forms. Unrest, change, criticism of the past, are often a sign of fuller life, of springtime, of growth.

There is at present a spirit of unrest and change as to Bible study, as to Sunday schools, as well as in regard to educational methods in colleges and common schools. It is not confined to one thing, but pervades all educational circles. Sometimes Sunday-school workers are troubled on account of the severe criticisms of Sunday-school work by educational experts, but they are still more severe on the work in our common schools. The comfort of it is that it means that we are alive, awake, striving after better things, seeing higher ideals, and on the way to attain them.

Further examples are found in new methods of church work and of worship. The business of conservatives is to retain the everlasting truths, the essential Gospel, the real revelation from God, but there must ever be new forms, new wordings, new statements, with the utmost freedom. So our religious experiences are not patterned exactly after those of the notable saints. We are not to imitate their outward lives, but retain the inward spirit.

IV. RESTORATION FROM THE DEAD; JAIRUS' DAUGHTER, vers. 18–26.

Time. Autumn, A. D. 28, in connection with Matthew's feast.

Place. Capernaum, Matthew's house, and the house of Jairus.

Parallels. Mark 5: 22–43; Luke 8: 41–56.

18. **While he spake**, was speaking, **these things**, in Matthew's house, **there came a certain ruler** of the synagogue, Jairus by name (Luke). One of the elders, or presiding officers elected to have charge of all synagogue affairs. They formed the local Sanhedrim or tribunal, they convened the assembly, preserved order, invited readers and speakers, managed the schools connected with the synagogue. Jairus must therefore have been one of the more prominent Jews of the city. It is possible that he was one of the delegation of Jews who went to Jesus in behalf of the centurion (Luke 7: 3, 4).

And worshipped him, an act of deep reverence and respect, shown by falling at Jesus' feet (Mark), dropping upon his knees, and bringing his forehead to the ground at the feet of Jesus.

My daughter is even now dead. Mark says "at the point of death." "He left her at the last gasp; he knew that she could scarcely be living now; and yet having no certain notices of her death, he at one moment expressed himself in one language, at the next in another." [1] **But come.** With the feeling so different from that of the Roman centurion (Luke 7: 7, 8), that Jesus must be present in order to heal. But it was comforting to have Jesus in the family and in the presence of the dying girl. Moreover, he knew that in most cases Jesus came into personal contact with those he healed. **And lay thy hand upon her.** To communicate his divine healing power.

19. **Jesus arose and followed him.** Jesus was, and is, always ready to answer every appeal. He is more willing to give us what we need than we are to ask him. **His disciples** went with him, accompanied by a great crowd (Mark), many of them doubtless the guests at Matthew's feast.

Wayside Ministries. On the way occurred the following incident, which was not only blessed to the woman healed, but was an aid to Jairus' faith, and a test.

[1] Trench.

20 ¶ And behold, a woman, [b] which was diseased with an issue of blood who had twelve years, came behind him, and touched the [c] hem of his garment:
21 For she said within herself, If I may but touch his garment, I shall be made whole.
22 But Jē'sus turned him about, turning and when he saw her, seeing he said, Daughter, [d] be of good comfort; cheer; thy faith hath made thee whole. [e] And the woman was made whole from that hour.

b Lev. 15. 25. *c* ch. 14. 36 & 23. 5. Cp. Num. 15. 38, 39 & Deut. 22. 12. *d* ver. 2. See Luke 7. 50. *e* ch. 15. 28 & 17. 18. Cp. ch. 8. 13.

V. THE ISSUE OF BLOOD, vers. 20–22.

20. **A woman which was diseased.** Nothing is known of her. One tradition is that she was the "Veronica, who, in the presence of Pilate, proclaimed the innocence of Jesus, and on the way to Golgotha wiped his face with her handkerchief." [1] **Twelve years.** Mentioned to show the hopelessness of her case, which was enhanced by the fact that she had spent all her property in vain efforts to obtain a cure (Mark and Luke). **Came behind him.** Shrinking and retiring. Mark states that she came because "she had heard of the things concerning Jesus," his wonderful cures. **And touched the hem of his garment.** The border or fringe of the outer robe, or cloak, flowing loosely, after the manner of the East; and this had its "border or fringe," probably of a bright blue mingled with white (Num. 15: 38). "The tassel" rather than "the fringe" or hem. The square over-garment, or *Tallith*, had tassels of three white threads, with one of hyacinth at each of the four corners; of these, two hung in front and two behind. It was easy to touch the latter without the wearer feeling the touch.[2]

21. **For she said within herself.** The imperfect tense of the original denotes intensity of feeling, "she kept saying over and over to herself." [3] **If I may but touch his garment.** "Great was her faith, though perhaps it was intertwined with some imperfect notions." [4] It was real faith, even if imperfect and perhaps superstitious. But she may have known that healings by the touch of Jesus had taken place, and then there would be no superstition in her act. The woman was cured as soon as she touched Jesus.

22. **But Jesus turned him about.** Because he was conscious within himself that healing power had gone forth from him (Mark 5: 30). His healing was an overflow, not an effort, — a work so unconscious and so utterly passive that it seems like a miracle spilt over from the fulness of his divine life, rather than a miracle put forth. [5] Jesus first asked who had touched him, probably to draw the woman to a higher and spiritual healing. This only would give the highest value to what he had done. But his question astonished the disciples, who knew that people were touching him all the time. The crowd was so great that he was being crushed, like grapes in a winepress, as the original word in Luke means. But Jesus knew that there was another kind of touch than that of the crowd. Then he looked around till she came trembling, and falling on her knees in thankful reverence confessed her touch and acknowledged her cure. She feared lest her act had been one of presumption because her touch was regarded by the Pharisees as defiling. "To this day the Jewish Rabbis in the East are careful not even to be touched by a woman's dress." [6]

This public confession was another step in her complete cure. It gave her conscious assurance of her cure, that it was perfect and enduring. It drew her soul into closer contact with Jesus himself. It developed and increased her faith, and led the way to a religious trust in him as her Saviour. This effect was completed by his farewell words.

When he saw her, he said, Daughter, a gentle, tender word, in itself an assurance of his goodwill. **Thy faith hath made thee whole.** Not superstition, not any power residing in a garment, nor any power in a physical touch; but faith, a spiritual act of the soul. Then he spoke his benediction (Mark), Go in peace. Literally, Go to or into peace. Go where peace is ever about you as an atmosphere.

Lessons from a Capernaum Woman.[7] 1. Some writers have used the failure of the Oriental physicians as an illustration of the fact that many seek the wrong helpers to save them from sin. "Men are suffering many things of Drs. Morality, Good Works, Penance, Good Resolution, and a host of others, as Dr. Ceremony,

[1] Lange. [2] *Int. Crit. Com.*
[3] Cambridge Bible. [4] Morison.
[5] Rev. A. J. Gordon, D. D., *Ministry of Healing.*
[6] Cambridge Bible, from Frankl., *Jews in the East*, ii. 81.
[7] See J. R. Miller's *Week-Day Religion*, "The Ministry of Sorrow" and "Wayside Ministries." His *Making the Most of Life*, "Getting Christ's Touch," has several good illustrations.

23 And when Jē'sus came into the ruler's house, and saw the *f* minstrels flute-players, and the people crowd making a noise, tumult,

f Rev. 18. 22. Cp. 2 Chr. 35. 25 & Jer. 9. 17, *al.*

Dr. Apathy, Dr. Merryman, and are all the time growing worse."

2. There is an overflowing fulness of healing and health in Jesus Christ. God has given the Holy Spirit to him without measure. He is like one, on some insulating substance, so charged with electricity that whosoever touches him even with a finger receives of the charge. Christ's spiritual abundance is exemplified by the overflowing fulness of creation. Everything is given in such overflowing abundance. The sun sends forth a million times more light and heat than is used by living beings. Thousands of times more seeds are produced than can possibly find room to grow.

3. As the opal, somewhat dull and lustreless, when held in the human hand gleams and flashes with all the glories of the rainbow, needing the touch and warmth of a human hand to bring out its iridescence, so the touch of Jesus, and in a degree of those who are filled with the spirit of Jesus, imparts spiritual warmth and radiance to human souls, and awakes the sleeping splendor that is in them, if they only are willing to receive.[1]

4. The Faith Touch and the World Touch. The crowd touched Jesus and received no healing influence. The woman touched him in faith, and was made whole. Christ has untold blessings for all; but what men receive from him depends on the faith and love with which they come to him. It is the common experience. We receive from nature according to what we bring to nature. Multitudes of men have seen apples fall, but only Newton received from the falling apple the law of gravitation. Men still go through the world with "eyes, and no eyes," and one writes a book, where another sees nothing. Arthur Helps compares some men to the birds on a telegraph wire, who are utterly unconscious of the messages of sorrow and joy, of business and friendship, — messages sometimes affecting whole nations, — which are passing right under their feet. It needs the battery and connecting instruments in order to read what passes on the wire. It needs hearts of love and faith, longings for holiness, and the spirit of prayer, if we would receive the blessings which Christ has for us all.

"The healing of the seamless dress
Is by our beds of pain;
We touch him in life's throng and press
And we are whole again." [2]

"Oh! touch the hem of His garment,
And thou, too, shall be free;
His saving power, this very hour,
Shall give new life to thee." [3]

5. The Cost of Helping. Real help always costs something. We can give money at small expense, but sympathy and heart help make us know that "power has gone forth from me." "Every sunbeam that paints a flower or cheers a sick-room costs a portion of the sun's substance. . . . Books which truly help us must have cost their authors a great deal more than the mere literary labor of their production. Every word that tells of Christian peace is the fruit of a victory over self, in times of sore struggle and trial." [4] "The so-called passive virtues either are not virtues, or are not passive. Humility, patience, self-denial, and the forgiveness of injuries are battles and victories." [5]

Jairus' Daughter dies and is restored to life. Jesus now proceeds on his way to the house of Jairus. The interruption must have been agonizing to the Jewish ruler, and his faith must have been tried by the seemingly unnecessary delay to heal a woman who could as well as not have waited a little longer; how could Jesus linger when Jairus' heart was hot with haste and a life hung in the balance? and still more when at this point messengers came from his house saying that Jesus was too late, for his daughter was dead. But the cure of the woman must have given a new impulse to faith and hope, as he heard Jesus say to the woman, "Thy faith hath made thee whole; go in peace." And still more when Jesus said to him, in response to the message from home, "Believe only, and she shall be made whole." There was no limit to Christ's power; the only danger was that Jairus' faith should fail, and he not be worthy to receive the earthly blessing, because he had not accepted the spiritual blessing. In all this Jesus was increasing and developing the ruler's faith.

23. **Jesus came into the ruler's house,** taking with him Peter, James, and John (Mark) as witnesses of the miracle. All others, except the father and mother, were left outside. These three were the most advanced, and could make the best use of what they saw. **Saw the minstrels.**

[1] See J. R. Miller's *Week-Day Religion*, "The Ministry of Sorrow" and "Wayside Ministries." His *Making the Most of Life*, "Getting Christ's Touch," has several good illustrations

[2] Whittier.

[3] Geo. F. Root.

[4] H. C. Trumbull.

[5] R. D. Hitchcock.

24 He said, unto them, Give place: for the *g* maid is not dead, but *h* sleepeth. And they laughed him to scorn.

25 But *i* when the people were crowd was put forth, he went entered in, and *j* took her by the hand; and the maid damsel arose.

26 And the fame hereof went abroad forth into all that land.

g Cp. Acts 20. 10. *h* John 11. 4, 11. *i* Acts 9. 40. *j* Mark 9. 27. Acts 3. 7 & 9. 41.

These were *flute-players*, who employed mournful instrumental music on occasion of deaths, in order to assist the "mourning women" with their dirges. Sometimes they were hired, sometimes neighbors volunteered, as is common still in the East.[1] **And the people**, a crowd, **making a noise.** They were the professional mourners and neighbors weeping and wailing (Mark). "The *weeping* was a dolorous rather than tearful series of ejaculations, and the *wailing* was beating of the breast, rending the outer garment, tearing out the hair, with outcries, in which neighbors joined." [2] This horrible clamor indicated that preparations for the funeral had already begun.

24. **He said unto them, Give place.** Make room, and he put them all out of the house. **For the maid is not dead, but sleepeth.** "That he meant this figuratively (comp. John 11 : 11–14; 1 Cor. 15 : 6, 51; 1 Thess. 4 : 13) is scarcely to be doubted from Luke 8 : 49, 52, esp. 55, and from the whole spirit of the narrative. It was natural that he should so speak here, both because he purposed to restore her immediately to life, and to signify the impropriety of the din and uproar they were making." [2] "To speak of death as a sleep is an image common, I suppose, to all languages and nations. Thereby the reality of the death is not denied, but only the fact implicitly assumed that death will be followed by a resurrection, as sleep is by an awakening." [3] Our word CEMETERY means "sleeping place."

And they laughed him to scorn. Κατεγέλων, from κατά, *down from*, as from a height, and γελάω, *to laugh*, — *to laugh down upon one* as basely inferior; or κατά, *against*, — *to laugh against one*, expressing hostility. They were so sure that the girl was really dead; and they did not perceive that Jesus was speaking figuratively from the knowledge of what he intended to do. This is given as an unquestionable proof of the reality of the miracle.

25. **The people were put forth**, because they would be a hindrance. They were present from curiosity or business, and would interfere with the solemnity and the spiritual blessing upon the family. Besides, their services were no longer needed. **He went in, and took her by the hand**, and said in their common speech, *Talitha, Cumi*, "Young maiden, arise." **And the maid arose**, and walked and ate (Mark), as evidence of her complete restoration.

26. And although Jesus charged them not to speak of it, yet the fame, or report, **hereof went abroad into all that land**, that part of the country. Possibly too great notoriety might have interfered with the spiritual work of Jesus, by calling him away from his teaching, and by drawing their attention too much to healing of the body, and away from the spiritual truths he would impress. Possibly the notoriety might have injured the young girl, and dulled the spiritual impression upon the family. The good seed would grow best in quiet retirement.[4]

LESSONS OF ENCOURAGEMENT FROM JAIRUS' EXPERIENCE.

1. It is right and good to pray for temporal blessings, for anything we need. For God loves to give us every good gift. And by the faith gained from these we obtain faith for higher and better things. The stairway to heaven begins on earth.

2. God's power and love are so great that the largest demands on them are met as easily as the smallest. The ocean bears up the *Great Eastern* as easily as a leaf. The sunshine warms a world as easily as a clod.

3. The strange delays of Jesus by the way, here and in the case of Lazarus (John 11), were to strengthen faith by its trial, as the storm blast upon the oak makes it strike its roots deeper in the soil. The faith increased by the trial of delay enabled the ruler still to believe, even when he heard his child was dead. This enabled Jesus to give larger blessings, to work a miracle with deeper meaning, to increase love and gratitude, to bring the eternal world closer to the daily life of that home. It made that home and that family a continual testimony to the power and love of Jesus, a perpetual witness that the Messiah, the Saviour of the world, had come. "God's delays are not denials." [5]

4. The reason why faith is the condition of

[1] Morison. [2] Professor Bliss. [3] Dean Trench.
[4] Longfellow's *Poems*, "Resignation." Susan Coolidge's *Poems*, "Talitha-Cumi."

[5] See *Expectation Corner*, "The Delayed Blessings Office."

27 ¶ [k] And when as Jē'sus departed passed by from thence, two blind men followed him, crying out, and saying, Have mercy on us, Thou [l] son of Dā'vid: have mercy on us.

28 And when he was come into the house, the blind men came to him: and Jē'sus saith unto them, Believe ye that I am able to do this? They said say unto him, Yea, Lord.

29 [m] Then touched he their eyes, saying, [n] According to your faith be it done unto you.

k Cp. ch. 20. 30–34. *l* ch. 12. 23 & 15. 22 & 20. 30, 31 & 22. 42. See ch. 1. 1. *m* Mark 8. 25. John 9. 6. *n* See ver 2.

receiving God's best blessings lies in the nature of faith itself, which not only expects to receive some gift, but trusts, and loves, and obeys. It sees spiritual things. Spiritual blessings thus flow from the temporal, so that temporal blessings are doubly blessed.[1]

Joash's three arrows, 2 Kings 13:14–19; and the widow's vessels of oil, 2 Kings 4:1–7, are illustrations of how it shall be done according to our faith.

5. THE RESURRECTION AND THE LIFE. (1) Jesus here, and in the other restorations of the dead to life, gives us examples of the soul's existence after the death of the body, and apart from the body. He proves by facts, not merely by assertions, that the soul does not die with the body. (2) These miracles prepare us to accept the fact of his resurrection, on which depend the truth of the Gospel and the proof of his Messiahship. If Jesus can raise others from the dead, there is nothing incredible in his own resurrection and the immortal life it proves. (3) Jesus is still the resurrection and the life. Our dear ones are raised again by him to a life as much more glorious than the life here as a plant in full bloom is more glorious than the seed from which it sprung. (4) The resurrection from the dead is an object lesson and acted parable of the spiritual resurrection from the death of sin to newness of life. A change not of place, but of life and heart, is the one essential condition of the new world we long for.

6. Was it an advantage to Jairus' daughter to come back into life? Would she be better, if not happier, for a longer earthly experience? Could she do more good by being a perpetual sermon, discoursing on the love and power of Jesus, on the fact of life apart from the body, on the blessings of faith in Jesus?[2]

VI. BLINDNESS CURED; TWO BLIND MEN, vers. 27–31.

TIME. Autumn, A. D. 28, immediately following the last two miracles.

PLACE. Capernaum or vicinity.

27. **And when Jesus departed thence.** From the house of Jairus, or possibly from the city. **Two blind men.** "Blindness was, and is, one of the commonest afflictions of the natives of Palestine; the blear eyes, often crusted round with dried secretion, and fly-infested, make some of the most sickening sights in a Syrian village crowd."[3] The dust, sand, sleeping in the open air, insects, the hot sun, are among the causes. "More than half of all the people we met in that land of darkness (Egypt) were blind, or sore-eyed, or in some way obviously diseased."[4]

Two went together for company and mutual help. **Followed him.** The noise and conversation of the crowd would point out to them where Jesus was. **Crying.** "Blind men naturally use their voices a great deal."[5] **Thou son of David.** The well-known popular title of the Messiah, implying that they believed Jesus to be the Messiah, one of whose glorious works was to be the opening of the eyes of the blind (Isai. 35:5; 42:7). Their cry was, therefore, a double confession of their faith, (1) in his power to help, (2) in his Messiahship. **Have mercy on us.** The Messiah would be full of lovingkindness and tender mercies.

28. **And when he was come into the house.** His home at Capernaum, or if he was elsewhere, the house where he was staying. **Believe ye that I am able to do this?** Equivalent to saying, Do you believe that I am the Messiah? This question pointed to a spiritual faith beyond the mere healing, which opened the way to the better blessings.

29. **According to your faith be it unto you.** Faith is the hand which takes what God offers, the spiritual organ of appropriation, the conducting link between man's emptiness and God's fulness. "It is the bucket let down into the fountain of God's grace, without which the man could never draw water of life from the wells of salvation."[6] See on Practical Lesson 4, under Jairus.

[1] See Ruskin's *Modern Painters*, vol. v. pp. 362–365. Sheldon's *Robert Hardy's Seven Days*. Browning's *Poems*, "An Epistle," showing how things looked through the raised Lazarus' eyes.

[2] See *Expectation Corner*, "The Delayed Blessings Office."

[3] Hastings' *Bible Dictionary*.

[4] Trumbull's *Studies in Oriental Social Life*.

[5] Schaff.

[6] Trench.

30 And their eyes were opened; and And Jē′ṣus straitly strictly charged them, saying, [o] See that that no man know it. it.

31 [p] But they, when they were departed, went forth, and spread abroad his fame in all that country. land.

32 ¶ As And as they went out, forth, behold, [q] they there was brought to him a dumb man [r] possessed with a devil.

33 And when the devil was cast out, the dumb man spake: and the multitudes [s] marvelled, saying, It was never so seen in Ĭṣ′rạ-el.

34 But the Phăr′ī-seeṣ said, He By the prince of the devils casteth he out devils. through the prince of the devils.

o See ch. 8. 4. *p* Mark 1. 45 & 7. 36. *q* Cp. ch. 12. 22-24 & Luke 11. 14, 15. *r* See ch. 4. 24. *s* Cp. Mark 1. 27.

30. **And their eyes were opened.** "It is worthy of note that the cure was instantaneous and complete, so that the blind men apparently straightway went out from his presence to proclaim their cure; whereas in all cases of natural cure, the eyes must go through a long process of protection from extreme light which, in their weakened state, they cannot bear."[1] And they have to learn how to see, and understand aright the pictures on the retina of their eyes. **And Jesus straitly** (strictly) **charged them, saying, See that no man know it.** The reasons are given above, under ch. 8 : 4.

31. **But they . . . spread abroad his fame.** They disobeyed Jesus in this. "They probably beguiled themselves with guesses as to the motives of his injunction. Not unlikely they fancied that it was the mere expression of a beautifully unostentatious spirit. *It is his modesty*, they would say to themselves. *But his modesty is wronging him. We must not yield to it. We must speak out.* It was really an unkind return, though not meant as such, for all his kindness."[2]

LESSONS FROM THE BLIND MEN.

1. Mr. Ruskin says that "the greatest thing a human soul ever does in this world is to see something, and to tell what it sees in a plain way. Hundreds of people can talk for one who can think; but thousands can think for one who can see. To see clearly is poetry, prophecy, and religion all in one." If one can see, —

> "The common sun, the air, the skies,
> To him are opening paradise."

Spiritual sight, the vision of God and truth and the beauty of holiness, is equally blessed.

2. There are in the world three kinds of blindness, physical, mental, and spiritual.

3. For all these Jesus is the light of the world. "And the life is the light of men." Under his influence blind asylums have been founded, and the prevention and cure of blindness are infinitely increased. Sight is prolonged for years in the aged. It is wonderful how great things are done for the blind under the influence of the Gospel. The *American Cyclopedia* gives a long list, not only of the institutions for the blind, where they are taught to read and to work and earn their living, but of blind men who have become celebrated for philosophy, poetry, military exploits, music, botany, sculpture, law, divinity, as professors of mathematics, travellers, pianists, painters, road surveyors. Note especially the case of Helen Keller.

4. In many cases the gospel does, in all cases it might, give new spiritual visions.

> "And when a damp
> Fell round the path of Milton, in his hand
> The thing became a trumpet, whence he blew
> Soul-animating strains — alas, too few."[3]

> "My vision thou hast dimmed, that I may see
> Thyself, thyself alone.
>
> Visions come and go,
> Shapes of resplendent beauty round me throng;
> From angel lips I seem to hear the flow
> Of soft and holy song."[4]

VII. DEMONS CAST OUT; THE DUMB DEMONIAC, vers. 32–34.

TIME. Autumn, A. D. 28. Immediately after the last miracle.

PLACE. Galilee, in the vicinity of Capernaum.

32. **As they**, the two blind men, **went out**, were going out, **they**, indefinite, some persons. **A dumb man possessed with a devil**, demon. For discussion on demoniacs, see on ch. 8 : 28–34.

33. **The dumb spake**, a new and marked feature. **The multitudes marvelled.** This awakened interest, although of no value in itself, called attention to the mission of Jesus, and awakened interest in it. We are not to think too lightly of those who come from curiosity to hear the gospel.

34. **But the Pharisees**, always looking for something to quiet their consciences in rejecting Jesus, said, **He casteth out devils**, demons,

[1] Abbott.
[2] Morison.
[3] Wordsworth.
[4] Miss E. Lloyd, on Milton's blindness.

35 [t] And Jē'sus went about all the cities and the villages, teaching in their synagogues, and preaching the gospel of the kingdom, and healing every sickness all manner of disease and every disease among the people. all manner of sickness.

36 But [u] when he saw the multitudes, [v] he was moved with compassion on for them, because they fainted, were distressed and were scattered, abroad, [w] as sheep not having no a shepherd.

37 [x] Then saith he unto his disciples, The harvest truly is is plenteous, but the labourers are are few;

38 [y] Pray ye therefore the Lord of the harvest, that he will [z] send forth labourers into his harvest.

t See ch. 4. 23, 24. *u* Cp. ch. 14. 14. *v* Mark 6. 34. *w* Num. 27. 17. 1 Kin. 22. 17. Ezek. 34. 5. *x* Luke 10. 2. John 4. 35. *y* Cp. 2 Thess. 3. 1. *z* ch. 20. 2. Cp. Mark 1. 12.

through the prince of the devils, demons. Jesus, they hinted, was playing a part under Satan in pretending to drive out devils from the sick, that he might win the people to listen to his pestiferous teaching, and thus aid the kingdom of evil. The answer to this charge is reported in chapter 12: 22–30, in connection with a similar cure.

VIII. MANY MIRACLES OF HEALING, ver. 35.

See on 4: 23–25; and 8: 16, 17.[1]

IX. THE CALL FOR MORE LABORERS, vers. 36–38.

Chapter 10 should begin with these verses.

TIME. Autumn of A. D. 28.

PLACE. Throughout the cities and villages of Galilee.

36. **When he saw the multitudes**, as he was touring through the populous region of Galilee. There were many more waiting for his healing power and his teaching than any one person could reach. **He was moved with compassion.** Thus the Father "so loved the world." Infinite love and compassion is the keynote of the gospel, the motive for missionary work and all deeds of helpfulness. **Because they fainted.** R. V., "were distressed." The word originally meant flayed, rent, mangled, applied to sheep fleeced and torn by wild beasts. So these people were mangled by disease and by sin, as by wild beasts. **Were scattered abroad.** Not dispersed, but thrown down, prostrated by disease, by weariness, by sin, by hunger of soul, as soldiers are prostrated on the ground by their enemies. **As sheep having no shepherd.** Those who should have been their shepherds, who professed to be such, were no true shepherds, but hirelings, who ate the sheep they should feed.[2] (See John 10: 1-18.)

37. **Then saith he unto his disciples.** To all who accepted him as well as to the twelve. **The harvest truly is plenteous.** Not merely "those who will actually be saved, but men in general, who, unless gathered and saved, will perish like wheat that is not reaped."[3] The seed had been sown during the past ages. It had been sown by the word of God, and now especially by Jesus himself. The people were prepared, so that it was possible for them to be gathered into the kingdom. The fields were "white already to harvest" (John 4: 35). Never was this so true as it is of the world to-day. **But the labourers.** Those who were willing and were qualified to gather in this harvest. **Are few**, compared with the greatness of the work. There were not enough to do the work.

38. **Pray ye therefore.** You who are in training for the work, you who are to be laborers in the harvest, and realize the greatness of the need and the difficulty of the work. It is instructive to note that the laborers themselves, and those who ought to be laborers, were the ones instructed to pray for more laborers. (1) They felt the need and would, therefore, pray with heart and soul. (2) The prayer was an inspiration to enter more heartily into the work themselves. "The injunction is *in part* equivalent to this: *Beseech ye the Lord of the harvest that he may accept* YOU, *and thrust* YOU *forth into the harvest field.*"[4] (3) No one has greater need of praying, of constant communion with God, than those who would gather in his harvest.

All who are interested in missions of any kind should take heed to this precept of Jesus. **That he will send forth.** "The word is stronger: *thrust out, force them out*, as from urgent necessity."[5] **Labourers into his harvest.**

NOTE. (1) God gathers his harvest by human

[1] See Hood's *Poems*, "The Lady's Dream;" and Foster's *Cyclopedia of Poetry*, "Doing Good."

[2] See the capital interpretation of Ruskin in his *Sesame and Lilies*, of a passage in Milton's *Lycidas*.

[3] Broadus.

[4] Morison.

[5] Prof. M. R. Vincent.

instrumentality. (2) An increase of laborers can come both from an increase of numbers and from an increase of power in those already working. "A man that in ordinary circumstances weighs a hundred pounds, when filled with the Holy Spirit and with power, may weigh a ton." (3) The same is true of those who are specially qualified by communion with God, the study of the Word, a higher character, prayer, practice, experience, and study of the principles and methods of Christian work. (4) "Man-made ministers are useless."[1] But such laborers as the Lord of the harvest does put forth, we may endeavor, with his blessing, to train for the better performance of their work. (5) God's laborers are impelled, often against their own natural choice, by the love of God, by a sense of duty, by the needs of men, by opportunities offered, by fitness for the work. So Paul felt, "Woe is me if I preach not the gospel." So many a worker has felt. Thus Mahomet, in the beginning of his career, said to his uncle, who tried to make him keep silence, that if the sun stood on his right hand and the moon on his left ordering him to hold his peace, he could not obey.

CHAPTER 10.

The Twelve Apostles, and Instructions for Their Guidance.

Section IX. — A NEW STAGE IN THE DEVELOPMENT OF THE KINGDOM; A HIGHER COURSE OF INSTRUCTION IN THE SCHOOL OF CHRIST.

1. The Twelve Apostles, vers. 1–4.
2. Their Field of Work, vers. 5, 6.
3. Their Work in this Field, vers. 7–13.
4. How to deal with Opposers, vers. 14–23.
5. Encouragements with Instruction from Seven Points of View, vers. 24–42.

Time.
Winter of A. D. 29.

Place.
Galilee.

1 [a] And when he had called unto *him* his twelve disciples, he and gave them power *against* authority over unclean spirits, to cast them out, and to heal all manner of sickness disease and all manner of disease. sickness.

a Mark 3. 13–15 & 6. 7–13. Luke 6. 13 & 9. 1, 2.

The disciples had now been, some of them, almost two years in the school of Christ, the best school in the world. They were being trained to continue the founding of the kingdom after his death, which was less than a year and a half in the future. The work of Jesus had grown to require more laborers, and the disciples were now advanced enough to take a higher grade of training, by working themselves under his supervision, and thus to become able to carry on the work after Jesus had gone.

Jesus knew that these common men must be trained if they were to do good work. There is no use in trying to bombard Gibraltar with unloaded guns. And there is no training so good as actual practice in the lessons they had learned. No one knows perfectly the theory till he has worked it out in daily life. Practising precepts also impresses them on the memory. We learn by doing. Practising our instructions guards us against false interpretations and misunderstandings.

It is uncertain whether these instructions were given all at one time, and many of them repeated at other times; or whether this is a summary of instructions given at various times and places, and brought together here by Matthew.

I. THE TWELVE APOSTLES, vers. 1–4.

Parallels, Mark 6: 7; Luke 9: 1.

1. **Called unto him his twelve disciples.**[2] Whom he had chosen some time before, just previous to the Sermon on the Mount. The number was according to the twelve tribes of Israel. In ver. 2 they are called **the twelve apostles.** *Apostle* means "one sent forth" on a mission, "a messenger." Our word *missionary*, derived from the Latin, likewise signifies "one sent." *Disciples*

[1] Spurgeon.

[2] Compare, in Scott's *Poems*, the assembling of the clans by the fiery cross: —

"When flits this cross from man to man,
Vich Alpine's summons to his clan,
Burst be the ear that fails to heed!
Palsied the foot that shuns to speed!"

2 [b] Now the names of the twelve apostles are these: The first, Sī'mon, [c] who is called Pē'tẽr, and [d] Ăn'drew his brother; [d] Jāmes, the *son* of Zĕb'e-dee, and Jŏhn his brother;

3 Phĭl'ip, and Bär-thŏl'ŏ-mew; Thŏm'as, and [e] Măt'thew the publican; Jāmes, the *son* of Ăl-phæ'us, and Leb-bæ'us, whose surname was Thăd-dæ'us;

4 Sī'mon the Ca'naan-ite, Ca'na-næ'an, and Jū'das Ĭs-căr'ĭ-ot, who also betrayed him.

b For ver. 2–4, see Mark 3. 16–19. Luke 6. 14–16. Acts 1. 13. *c* Matt. 16. 18. John 1. 42. *d* Matt. 4. 18, 21. *e* Matt. 9. 9.

are learners, scholars, those who go to school, as here to Christ, the great Teacher. It was needful that these twelve should be both apostles and disciples. They could not be fitting messengers (apostles) unless they had been learners, and their work as messengers of the gospel was a means of their learning more.

There is not space to give the history of each of the twelve, but only some general observations which will prove instructive, in addition to the accompanying chart.[1]

2. **Simon . . . called Peter** (the rock), **and Andrew**, were brothers, and among the first five disciples of Jesus (John 1: 35–45). **James . . . and John**, were also brothers, and named by Jesus, Boanerges, Sons of thunder, probably describing "their fiery, vehement temperament."[2] Yet John so controlled this temperament that he was "the disciple whom Jesus loved," and had the deepest insight into Jesus' heart. These first four called were fishermen.

3. **Bartholomew** is undoubtedly the Nathanael of John 1: 45. **James** is the modernized form of Jacob. **Lebbæus** is the same as **Thaddæus** and as Judas (Jude), the son of James (R. V.), in Luke 6: 16.

4. **Simon the Canaanite** means not "of Canaan" nor "of Cana," but "the Zealot," "a party of fanatic nationalists among the Jews, leaders of the national revolt against the foreign yoke."[2] **Judas Iscariot**, *i. e.*, man of Kerioth, a town of Judah. He was the only one of the disciples who was not a Galilean. **Who also betrayed him**, is the Cain-mark on Judas which nothing can blot out or wash away.[3] Judas grew worse and worse under the best influences, as weeds grow in the richest soil and in the brightest sunshine.

Their Personality and Possibilities. These twelve apostles were plain men who had not been perverted by the false philosophies, traditions, and morals of the day. They were mostly working-men, business men, practical men, but of great variety of early training and of business life. Some were poor; some were comparatively well off; some belonged to country villages, some to the city; several were fishermen. "There were two, at least," says Dr. Gibson, "the choice of whom seemed to violate all dictates of wisdom and prudence, — Matthew the publican, of a hated class, inviting hostility; and Simon the Zealot, a radical revolutionist in politics." Yet the choice of these showed the broadness of the gospel and its power. They were men of ability; there were great possibilities in them. Christ transformed common men into apostles, the foundation stones of the New Jerusalem, the leaders of the kingdom that was to transform the world. The charcoal was changed into diamonds. They were far from faultless, but the faults were flaws in a jewel, not the crudeness of the charcoal.

It is very noticeable in all history that the larger part of the great men in every department have sprung from the common people, so far as the absence of wealth, or rank, or great ancestry can make them common.

Their Enduement with Power. 1. **He gave them power.** The word signifies both "power" and "authority" or "right." "Even if it were not evident that here both ideas are included, we find both words expressly used in the parallel passage of Luke 9: 1. In other words, he both *qualified* and *authorized* them."[4] This enduement was vastly increased on the day of Pentecost.

(1) This was a direct enduement from the spirit of Jesus, just as he can now endue us through his Holy Spirit. (2) He had been instructing them for a large part of two years, by direct teaching, by intimate companionship, and by personal power. (3) It was the same kind of power that Jesus was using in his own work.

Their Great Variety of Character. "Jesus chose twelve disciples, that every man, in all time, might find himself represented among the apostles. The doubter finds himself in Thomas; the fierce, hot-headed, quick-tempered man finds himself in John, the son of thunder; the opinionated, impulsive man in Peter; the hard-headed, practical man, desiring the first place in the kingdom, in James, etc. We are

[1] See *Bib. Dic.* and Vance's *College of the Apostles.*
[2] Gould, in *Int. Crit. Com.*
[3] Compare Shakespeare's Lady Macbeth after her crime.
[4] Ellicott.

No.	Name.	Surname.	Parents.	Home.	Business.	Writings.	Work.	Death.
1	Simon.	Peter } =*Rock*. Cephas }	Jonah.	Early life in Bethsaida, afterwards at Capernaum.	Fisherman.	1 Peter, 2 Peter, (Mark?)	A missionary among the Jews as far as Babylon and Rome.	Crucified head downward, at Rome. *Tradition.*
2	Andrew.		Jonah.		Fisherman.		Preached in Scythia, Greece and Asia Minor. *Tradition.*	Crucified on St. Andrew's cross (X). *Tradition.*
3	James, the elder.	Boanerges, or *Sons of Thunder.*	Zebedee and Salome.	Bethsaida and afterwards in Jerusalem.	Fisherman.		Preached in Jerusalem and Judea.	Beheaded by Herod, A. D. 44, at Jerusalem.
4	John, the beloved disciple.				Fisherman.	Gospel. 3 Epistles. Revelation.	Labored among the churches of Asia Minor, especially Ephesus.	Banished to Patmos, A. D. 95. Recalled. Died a natural death. *Tradition.*
5	James, the less or younger.		Alphæus or Cleophas and Mary.	Galilee.		(Epistle of James?)	Preached in Palestine and Egypt. (Bishop of Jerusalem?)	Crucified in Egypt, or by another tradition thrown from a pinnacle. *Tradition.*
6	Jude.	Same as Thaddæus and Lebbæus.		Galilee.		Epistle of Jude.	Preached in Assyria and Persia. *Tradition.*	Martyred in Persia. *Tradition.*
7	Philip.			Bethsaida.			Preached in Phrygia.	Died martyr at Hierapolis in Phrygia. *Trad.*
8	Bartholomew.	Nathanael.		Cana of Galilee.				Flayed to death. *Tradition.*
9	Matthew.	Levi.	Alphæus.	Capernaum.	Tax-collector. Publican.	Gospel.		Died a martyr in Ethiopia. *Tradition.*
10	Thomas.	Didymus.		Galilee.			Claimed by the Syrian Christians as founder of their church; perhaps also in Persia and India.	Martyred. Shot by a shower of arrows while at prayer. *Tradition.*
11	Simon.	The Cananæan, or *Zelotes.*		Galilee.				Crucified. *Tradition.*
12	Judas.	Iscariot.		Kerioth of Judea.				Suicide.

5 These twelve Jē'sus sent forth, and commanded charged them, saying, Go not into the any way of the Gĕn'tīles, and enter not into any city of *f* the Să-măr'ĭ-tăns: enter ye not:
6 *g* But but go rather to *h* the lost sheep of *i* the house of Ĭs'ra-el.
7 And as ye go, preach, saying, *j* The kingdom of heaven is at hand.
8 *k* Heal the sick, cleanse the lepers, raise the dead, cleanse the lepers, cast out devils: *l* freely ye have received, freely give.

f 2 Kings 17. 24. Ezra 4. 10. Luke 9. 52 & 10. 33 & 17. 16. John 4. 9, 39, 40 & 8. 48. Acts 8. 25. Cp. Acts 1. 8. *g* Matt. 15. 24. Cp. Acts 3. 25, 26 & 13. 46. *h* Ps. 119. 176. Isai. 53. 6. Jer. 50. 6. Cp. Matt. 9. 36 & 18. 12. *i* Acts 2. 36 & 7. 42. Heb. 8. 8, 10. *j* Matt. 3. 2 & 14. 17. Luke 10. 9. *k* Cp. Matt. 11. 5. *l* Cp. Isai. 55. 1. Acts 3. 6 & 20. 33, 35.

all there. And to all of us can come like fitness, worthy of apostleship."[1] All kinds of men can become Christians; all kinds can serve the Lord in some good way. This great variety in Christians enables Christianity to meet the vast variety of men in the world. But all were one in heart, in the love of Jesus, in seeking the higher life, in building up the kingdom of heaven.

This variety gave them power. It takes many colors to make up the white light of the sun. It takes many kinds of food to build up the healthiest and strongest bodies. It takes many tones of harmonies to make an anthem. It takes a great variety of instruments to form an orchestra.

THEIR GROUPING. "One of the ways Jesus takes to overcome their imperfection in doing a work which called for perfection in the workers was in his grouping of the apostles. Our imperfection very commonly is of the nature of halfness. We see one side of a truth and not the other. We feel the greatness of some quality so strongly that we depreciate some other quality which seems opposed to it, but is really complementary. Our Lord seems to have acted with careful reference to this in sending out his apostles two by two in the order indicated in Matthew.

"Peter, the bold, impetuous man, acting on the spur of the moment, is joined with Andrew, the apostle instinctively chosen by the Scotch as their national patron, as far-seeing, cautious, careful, full of the sense of difficulty.

"James and John differed greatly in age. John must have been very young, for he outlived Jesus nearly seventy years. So the Master paired them off, old and young together.

"Philip, the slow-witted, was paired with Nathanael Bartholomew, the quick-witted.

"Thomas, the doubting, skeptical intellect, was joined with Matthew, one of the heroes of faith.

"James, the author of the Epistle, the most practical of men, was united with Jude, the man of doctrine.

"Simon, the Zealot, a man of zeal, enthusiasm, independence, and patriotism, was with Judas Iscariot, the business economist. 'So the Master made one whole man out of two half men. And so his church should go forth, two by two, each with the one most unlike himself, and therefore best able to help him.'"[2]

II. THEIR FIELD OF WORK, vers. 5, 6.

5. **Go not into the way of the Gentiles.** Do not take any road that leads to the surrounding nations, as, for instance, the cities of Tyre and Sidon. **City of the Samaritans.** Though nearer than the Gentiles. The time had not come for this more distant work, but it would come later.

6. **Go rather to the lost sheep of the house of Israel.** These belonged to the flock of God, but had wandered far away and were lost.

THIS LIMITATION (1) was only temporary. (2) The soil of the Jewish nation had been prepared for the good seed for generations, and here it would be easiest to put the good seed into the soil and get it rooted and growing. (3) They were not yet prepared to understand the universality of the gospel, and how the kingdom of God could best be extended to the Gentiles. The story of their development, in the Acts, shows clearly this condition. (4) They were best acquainted with these people. Our own town or city is the best base of operations. Begin at home, and then reach out into "the wide, wide world."

III. THEIR WORK IN THIS FIELD, vers. 7-13.

FIRST. PREACHING THE GOSPEL.

7. **They were to preach, saying, The kingdom of heaven is at hand.** The gospel Jesus himself preached in the beginning. The King had come. He brought pardon and peace and salvation from sin, and all that characterized the kingdom. Everything good was waiting for them at their very doors. Therefore repent and believe, as the only possible way of entering it.

SECOND. MINISTERING TO BODILY NEEDS.

8. **Heal the sick,** etc. Just what Jesus was doing all the time, for the same reasons. They were to help the people in their bodily needs, as a

[1] Bp. H. W. Warren. [2] Pres. R. E. Thompson, in the *Sunday-School Times* for Oct. 27, 1894.

9 *m* Provide neither / Get you no gold, nor silver, nor brass in your purses;
10 Nor scrip / no wallet for *your* journey, neither two coats, neither / nor shoes, nor yet staves: / staff: for *n* the workman / labourer is worthy of his meat. / food.

m For vers. 9–15, see Mark 6. 8–11 & Luke 9. 3–5. Cp. Luke 10. 4–12 & 22. 35. *n* 1 Tim. 5. 18. Cp. 1 Cor. 9. 4, 7–14.

proof and illustration of the spiritual blessings they proclaimed. They practically said, Here are some of the fruits of the gospel; taste and see. Only by visible help for the body that costs us something is it possible to prove that our efforts for men's souls are sincere. Sickness and demon possession were fruits of sin, object lessons of sin. Jesus came to undo the works of the devil. By healing sick bodies through his disciples he proved his power and willingness to heal sick souls, cleanse leprous hearts, raise the dead in sin, cast out all the devils of iniquity.

Freely ye have received. Jesus had charged nothing for what he had done. He came from heaven freely, he gave his life freely, he brought salvation to the disciples freely. **Freely give,** of that which has cost you nothing. Be like your Master, filled with his spirit of love. The very power of doing these kind deeds was a free gift; therefore they were to give freely, to take nothing for their work.

To take money for their miracles would ruin their work among the people, would teach selfishness instead of love, and cause them to be regarded as mere exorcists, instead of preachers of free salvation, with divine credentials. Moreover, only as we have received God's salvation freely, as a free gift, shall we be able to give freely, and preach a large, free, unearned pardon and new life.[1] A flowing brook gives as freely as it receives, and it is a joy, a refreshment. It turns the desert into a garden. It is life-giving. A bog or marsh does not give as freely as it receives, and it is an eye-sore, a blot on the landscape, breeding reptiles, and exhaling disease. It is the Dead Sea that receives but does not give.

THIRD. THEY WERE TO GO TWO BY TWO (Mark 6: 7). (1) Because thus they were complete and well balanced. Each would supplement the work of the other. They would reach different classes of minds, and where one failed the other would be ready with the right word. (2) They would aid and encourage one another, keep up each other's courage in time of difficulty, be suggestive of plans, and aid one another's warmth and glow of spiritual life. "With two there is warmth." (3) Two is the best number. More would be a hindrance, and would be divisive, while two would accomplish nearly all that more could do. (4) This is still one true and effective method of Christian work. Two are more than twice one.

> "So when two work together, each for each
> Is quick to plan, and can the other teach;
> But when alone one seeks the best to know,
> His skill is weaker and his thoughts are slow."

FOURTH. THEY WERE TO GO IN THEIR ORDINARY WAY. In their ordinary dress, as common travellers, and not in peculiar prophet garb, or with any kind of ostentation, but trusting God for necessary support.

9. **Provide neither gold,** nor even **brass,** or rather copper, of which their smallest coins were made. **In your purses.** Literally "girdles," in the folds of which money was usually carried.

10. **Scrip.** A wallet or small bag, "generally made of leather, and slung, like a satchel, over the shoulder, to hold the flat barley cakes, the olives, and figs, which form the simple commissariat of an Eastern pedestrian."[2] "It was called a *scrip*, perhaps, because it was designed to hold scraps, trifling articles, scraped off, as it were, from something larger. It was part of the pilgrim's or traveller's equipage. Shakespeare uses it in *As You Like It*, Act III., Scene 2. 'Though not with bag and baggage, yet with *scrip* and scrippage.'"[3] **Neither two coats.** Without change of garments, such as would be necessary on a long journey or in strange countries. **Neither shoes.** "It does not say 'sandals,' which were absolutely necessary for the protection of the feet in rocky or stony paths, and therefore the parallel passage in Mark reads, 'Be shod with sandals.' Shoes, or rather, as we should call them, slippers, had upper leathers and heels, and were made of softer material, and, at the present day, are always of brilliant colors. Probably, therefore, the prohibition is directed against show or luxury."[2] **Nor yet staves,** or a staff. They were to get nothing for their journey but what they had. But if they were used to a staff they could take it (Mark). **For the workman is worthy of his meat,** *i. e.*, food, enough to eat. They were to go forth and let the people for whom they labored support them. They did not receive this support as beggars, because they really earned it, and it trained the people in giving as freely as they received.

[1] See a beautiful illustration and example in *The Signet Ring.*

[2] Tristram.

[3] Cambridge Bible.

11 And into whatsoever city or town/village ye shall enter, enquire/search out who in it is worthy; and there abide till ye go thence/forth.

12 And when/as ye come/enter into an/the house, *o* salute it.

13 And if the house be *p* worthy, let *q* your peace come upon it: but if it be not worthy, let *q* your peace *r* return to you.

14 And whosoever shall not receive you, nor hear your words, when/as ye depart/go forth out of that house or that city, *r* shake off the dust of your feet.

15 Verily I say unto you, *s* It shall be more tolerable for *t* the land of Sŏd'om and Go-mor'rha/Go-mor'rah in the day of judgment, than for that city.

o Cp. 1 Sam. 25. 6 & 1 Chr. 12. 18. *p* Cp. ch. 8. 8 & Acts 16. 15. *q* Cp. Ps. 35. 13. *r* Acts 13. 51. Cp. Neh. 5. 13 & Acts 18. 6. *s* ch. 11. 24. *t* Gen. 18. 20 & 19. 28. 2 Pet. 2. 6.

NOTE 1. For them this was the best way to go on their mission. It was easy to do so among their countrymen, and perfectly simple and natural. It left them free from all worldly anxiety, so that they could give themselves wholly to their mission without fear or favor. It was the best way to reach the people. The religion of Jesus was for daily life. There was no show, no self-seeking, no expense.

NOTE 2. It is plain that this was no inflexible, unchangeable rule, like the laws of the Medes and Persians, for under other circumstances Jesus gave very different instructions (Luke 22: 35, 36). His disciples carried some money with them (John 12: 6; 13: 29). The disciples of Jesus must adapt themselves to circumstances, still adhering to the same great principles of simplicity, of trust, of absence of all self-seeking and pride, of complete devotion to Jesus and the gospel.

FIFTH. THEY WERE TO BE WISE AS SERPENTS AND HARMLESS AS DOVES.

11. **Into whatsoever city . . . enquire.** R. V., Search out. Do not go in a haphazard way which may lead you into trouble. **Who in it is worthy.** "Worthy of your intimacy, worthy of being associated with you in your evangelistic work, worthy of being Messianically honored;"[1] a man of piety and patriotism, who is willing to work in an unpopular cause for the sake of the people, and whose reputation will make the work attractive. "They must not lodge with those whose character would bring scandal on their profession."[2] And this represents the nature of the gospel, though he might be a Roman like Cornelius, or a publican like Matthew and Zaccheus. **There abide.** Luke adds, "go not from house to house." (1) Do not change your quarters for convenience or comfort. Do not waste your time thus, nor in an ostentatious round of visiting. Moreover, on their part, they were to make no trouble by interfering with family arrangements (Mark).

12. **Salute it.** Saying, "Peace be unto you," the usual salutation at this day.

13. **And if the house be worthy, let your peace come upon it.** Their very presence would be a benediction and blessing to all who were of open heart. To be with some persons "is a liberal education." Their presence in the home is like the ark of the Lord in the house of Obed-edom. **But if it be not worthy, let your peace return to you.** That is, it will be as if the words had not been spoken. No such peace can come to such a home. You cannot reward the unworthy with the blessings of the worthy. The apostles not dwelling in the family, the blessing of their presence could not be received by them. "The reflex influence of Christian effort is precious, whatever its direct results are."

IV. HOW TO DEAL WITH OPPOSERS, vers. 14–23.

These warnings were given so that (1) they would not be discouraged; (2) that wrong and selfish motives might be sifted out; (3) that they might know how to act in such circumstances.

14. **And whosoever shall not receive you.** This open denunciation was for towns where both message and messengers should be rejected. (See Luke 9: 52–56 for a case in point.) **Shake off the dust of your feet.** A symbolic act, indicating that they renounced all responsibility for them, and would not keep a particle of the ruin which must come upon such ungodly people, nor of their sin. Such a city must be treated as one of the heathen to whom, on this tour, they must not go. (See Matt. 18: 17.) In the eyes of the Jews, "the very dust of a heathen country was unclean, and it defiled by contact. It was regarded like a grave, or like the putrescence of death. If a spot of heathen dust had touched an offering, it must at once be burnt."[3]

15. **It shall be more tolerable for the land of Sodom,** etc. Because those wicked cities

[1] Morison. [2] Sadler. [3] Edersheim.

16 ¶ "Behold, I send you forth as sheep in the midst of wolves: be ye therefore [v] wise as serpents, and [w] harmless as doves.

17 But beware of men: for [x] they will deliver you up to [the] [y] councils, and [z] in their synagogues they will scourge you; [in their synagogues]

18 [x] And ye shall be brought [yea and] before governors and kings [shall ye be brought] for my sake, [a] for a testimony [against / to] them and [to] the Gĕn'tīles.

19 [b] But [x] when they deliver you up, [c] [take no thought / be not anxious] how or what ye shall speak: for [d] it shall be given you in that [same] hour what ye shall speak.

u Luke 10. 3. Cp. John 17. 18. *v* Gen. 3. 1. *w* Rom. 16. 19 (Gk.). Phil. 2. 15. Cp. 1 Cor. 14. 20. *x* See Mark 13. 9, 11 & Luke 12. 11, 12. *y* ch. 5. 22 & 26. 59, *al.* *z* See ch. 23. 34. *a* See ch. 8. 4. *b* For ver. 19–22, cp. Mark 13. 11–13 & Luke 21. 12–19 & 2 Tim. 4. 16, 17. *c* See ch. 6. 25. *d* Deut. 18. 18. Cp. Num. 23. 5. See Ex. 4. 12.

sinned against much less light, and rejected smaller and more dimly seen opportunities. (For Sodom, see Gen. 13 : 13; 18 : 20–32.) When we read of the destruction of Jerusalem forty years later, with its unutterable horrors and "great tribulation such as was not since the beginning of the world to this time, nor ever shall be," we understand the meaning of this warning to the Jewish towns. And it is but a visible type of what will befall individuals; and yet over all Jesus weeps as he did over Jerusalem, and desires earnestly that they should repent and escape. **In the day of judgment**, whenever that judgment should come. That day came to Jerusalem about forty years after this warning. To all sinners it will come on that last great day; and in many cases it comes before as well as then.

16. **Behold, I send you . . . as sheep**, harmless and defenceless, **in the midst of wolves**, who well illustrate the feelings and the power of the leaders, both Jewish and Roman. **Be ye therefore wise as serpents, and harmless as doves.** The qualities required for the safety of the unarmed traveller. Prudence and harmlessness are the defence of the weak. *Wise* = "prudent," full of precaution, possessing such "practical wisdom" as Paul had when he claimed the rights of Roman citizenship at Philippi.[1]

"Serpents show great caution and skill in avoiding danger. The Egyptian hieroglyphics use the serpent as the symbol of wisdom. We may understand that they were to be prudent in the recognition of danger, and in the choice of means for opposing or escaping it — in general as to their behavior when in danger. But such prudent regard for self-preservation is very apt to be accompanied, in men as in serpents, with the tricks of low cunning. This is forbidden by the other injunction. The word rendered 'harmless,' better 'simple' (margin R. V.), signifies literally unmixed, and hence pure (as pure gold), uncorrupted, and so guileless, sincere. They were not to deserve injury, or afford any pretext for it; and were to employ no trickery or other improper means of escaping from danger. They must combine prudence and simplicity. If the dove alone were taken as model, they might become silly (Hos. 7 : 11); if the serpent alone, they would become tricky."[2]

17. **Beware of men.** The men, the wolves who would devour the sheep. Not as a means of escaping persecution, but in order to prepare for it. **Deliver you up to the councils . . . synagogues.** Referring to persecutions by the Jews, who would be intensely opposed to them, and would persecute them bitterly.

18. **Before governors and kings.** Civil tribunals. The history of the early Church as recorded in the Acts, and in secular history, shows how this prophecy was fulfilled. **For my sake.** Persecutions on account of crime had no blessing, and no reward. But persecution for the sake of Jesus and his cause, and through them for the good of man, — these are a source of enthusiastic joy.

For a testimony against, rather "unto," **them**; not to condemn them, but to make known to them the Son of God and his gospel of grace. The history in the Acts shows how again and again this was true. The trials before the courts, civil and ecclesiastical, gave the apostles an opportunity to preach the gospel to the chief priests, scribes, governors, kings, people of highest rank, who in no other way could have been gathered together to hear the gospel. The persecution of Christians is like ringing a bell to call all men to see what Christianity does. It is setting a light upon a hill that it may shine far and wide. So Bishop Latimer, bound to the stake, said to Bishop Ridley, "We shall this day light such a candle, by God's grace, in England, as I trust shall never be put out again."

19. **When they deliver you up, take no thought.** (See on 6 : 25.) Be not anxious. Jesus

[1] Cambridge Bible.

[2] Dr. Broadus.

20 [e] For it is not ye that speak, but [f] the Spirit of your Father [which that] speaketh in you.

21 [g] And [the] brother shall deliver up [the] brother to death, and the father [his] child: and [the] children shall rise up against [their] parents, and cause them to be put to death.

22 And [h] ye shall be hated of all [men men] for my name's sake: [i] but he that endureth to the end, [the same] shall be saved.

23 But when they [j] persecute you in this city, [k] flee [ye] into [another: the next]: for verily I say unto you, Ye shall not have gone [over through] the cities of Ĭs'ra-el, [l] till the Son of man be come.

e Luke 12. 12. Acts 4. 8 & 6. 10 & 13. 9. 1 Cor. 15. 10. 2 Cor. 13. 3. Cp. ver. 40 & 1 Thess. 2. 13 & Heb. 1. 1. *f* Cp. John 15. 26. *g* ver. 35, 36. *h* ch. 24. 9. John 15. 18–21. Cp. Luke 6. 22 & Acts 5. 41, *al.* *i* ch. 24. 13. Mark 13. 13. Cp. Dan. 12. 12, 13 & James 5. 11 & Rev. 2. 10. See Heb. 3. 6. *j* ch. 23. 34. *k* Cp. ch. 12. 15 & Acts 8. 1 & 9. 25, 30 & 14. 6 & 17. 10, 14. *l* ch. 16. 28.

does not forbid them to think, but to be anxious. They must think, in order to be wise as serpents, and through meditation will usually come the light and guidance of Heaven. But there was no occasion for anxiety. Give your thoughts to your work; anxiety will hinder you, and make you timid. **For it shall be given you in that same hour what ye shall speak.** "This verse is best interpreted by such practical illustrations as are afforded by Acts 4: 19, 20; 5: 20–32; and especially Dan. 3: 16–18." This command gives no countenance whatever to preaching the gospel without preparation.

20. **For it is not ye that speak, but the Spirit of your Father which speaketh in you.** You are but the instruments, the channels, of the Holy Spirit. He will inspire you, suggest to you what you ought to say. "Observe," says Meyer, "the difference between what you *ought* to speak, and what you *will* speak. For only as one's character and motives are perfect, can he give perfect expression to the suggestions and inspiration of the Spirit."

21. **And the brother shall deliver up the brother.** So intense will be the feeling against the Gospel and its effects upon existing institutions that it will overpower even brotherly, paternal, and filial affection. The most intense feelings are those of religion united with conscience. "The history of persecutions for religion affords many instances of this. It is true even of civil disputes. Thucydides, describing the horrors of the Corcyrean sedition, says (iii. 82), 'The ties of relationship became weaker than those of party.'" [1]

22. **And ye shall be hated of all men.** "The Roman historian Tacitus speaks of the early Christians as a hated race. It is difficult for us in these days to understand how literally this was fulfilled. The most shameful practices were attributed to Christians; and partly in consequence of these falsehoods, partly from hatred of good, they were treated as the offscouring of the earth." [2] It is still true that those who are living wicked lives, and engaged in a bad business, hate those who preach and live a purer morality. **For my name's sake.** Because of your love to me. Because you are teaching my truth, and working for my kingdom. There is no virtue in being hated; but only in being hated for being good and doing good.

He that endureth to the end. Whose faith and love are so real and so strong that nothing can conquer them. **Shall be saved.** Saved from falling, saved from the calamities which befall the wicked. All that is best worth keeping shall be his forever; his soul shall be purified, not destroyed; his piety, love, faith, virtues, all that makes the kingdom of heaven, shall become brighter; his soul shall shine "like the stars forever and ever."

23. **When they persecute you in this city, flee ye into another.** Not from cowardice, or fear of martyrdom if that should be necessary, but because it was the best and most effective way of doing their work. For (1) they had not time to contend for their opportunity with magistrates or mobs, while there were so many places ready to receive them. They would far better plant the seed in the good soil ready to receive it, than to sow amid thorns and brushwood. (2) In almost every place there were some whose hearts were prepared, who were looking and longing for better things. Giving the Gospel to these in as many places as possible would be the best way to reach the others. (3) Where there is sharp opposition, contention often tends to confirm the wrong. But if the truth is presented, and then left to work its way in silence, it will often produce changes of which the opponent is almost unconscious, as a ship may turn around in so large

[1] Cambridge Bible.

[2] Prof. M. B. Riddle.

24 [m] The A disciple is not above his his master, nor the a servant above his lord.
25 It is enough for the disciple that he be as his master, and the servant as his lord. If [n] they have called the master of the house [o] Bĕ-ĕl'zẹ-bŭb, how much more *shall they call* them of his household?
26 Fear them not therefore: [p] for there is nothing covered, that shall not be revealed; and hid, that shall not be known.
27 What I tell you in the darkness, *that* speak ye in the light: and what ye hear in the ear, *that* preach ye proclaim upon the [q] housetops.

m Luke 6. 40. John 13. 16 & 15. 20. Cp. Heb. 12. 3. *n* ch. 9. 34 & 12. 24. Mark 3. 22. Luke 11. 15. See John 7. 20. *o* Cp. 2 Kin. 1. 2. *p* Mark 4. 22. Luke 8. 17. Cp. 1 Tim. 5. 25. For ver. 26–33, see Luke 12. 2–9. *q* See Luke 5. 19.

a circle, that its crew are not conscious of any change of direction.

Ye shall not have gone over the cities of Israel. Completed your presentation of the gospel to the Jewish nation. **Till the Son of man be come.** Till Jesus had been revealed as the Son of man, the Messiah, and his Messianic work had been finished, and the Messianic kingdom established. The Son of man had not fully come, his coming was not complete, till he had finished his teaching and his miracles, instituted his supper, died on the cross, was dead and buried, rose again, and ascended to his Father. Then, and then only, had he fully come. His first coming was completed as a whole. As a matter of fact it was not till after this that the gospel had been preached to all the Jews, and preaching to the Gentiles was begun.

V. ENCOURAGEMENTS, vers. 24–42.

FIRST. YOU WILL THUS BE LIKE YOUR MASTER.

24. **The disciple is not above his master.** The scholar is not above his teacher, that the scholar should expect to be exempt from the treatment accorded to his teacher.

25. **It is enough.** It is all one ought to expect, to be as his master. Therefore (1) you should not be disappointed if you are persecuted. It only puts you into close connection with your Master's experience. You will know him better. (2) You may rejoice because you can be like him. (3) You need not let your conscience trouble you, as if you had committed some error. Persecution does not prove that you are wrong. Do not be discouraged. Your perfect master suffered the same.

Beelzebub. Probably Beelzebul, "the Lord of the Mansion" (of the nether world) in the recesses of the pit. Though the demons might be allowed to pervade the upper world, the place from which they proceeded, their home, was the abyss (the Abaddon of Rev. 9 : 11).[1]

If they have called Jesus, the master of the house, the household of faith, **Beelzebub,** the master of hell, the prince of demons, **how much more shall they call them of his household** demons and devils, and try to expel them as such?

SECOND: THE TRUTH WILL BE MADE MANIFEST.

26. **Fear them not therefore.** Do not be troubled about this entire misrepresentation of your character and work. The truth is sure to be made known about your Master, the Son of God; and so for you **there is nothing covered, that shall not be revealed.**[2] "You and your traducers will alike be shown up in the colors of truth. Though you should be *covered* with obloquy, your integrity shall be *revealed;* though your true value is *hid*, it shall yet be *known*. Secret villainy and secret virtue will alike be set in the full blaze of day. Anticipate the future, and be not overwhelmed by the present."[3] You will be recognized at last as the great benefactors of the world. Almost every one who seeks to reform the world and destroy its evils has had this experience. The whole history of reform is an illustration of this verse.

27. The principle stated has a wider application. Not only will God make the truth known concerning you, but you also are to be revealers. **What I tell you in darkness,** in private, in parables which are yet dark sayings to the world, **speak ye in light.** You are to proclaim everywhere the great truths of the gospel. What Jesus taught them privately was for the very purpose of making it known. (See the parable of the sower and Jesus' remarks on why he spoke in parables, 13 : 1–23.)

Preach ye, proclaim as herald, **upon the house tops.** "The simile here may refer to a custom in the synagogue schools, where the master whispered in the ear of an interpreter, who repeated what he heard in a loud voice. So Lightfoot suggests in *Horæ Hebraicæ*. The housetops are

[1] See Prof. Cheyne's new *Encyclopedia Biblica*.

[2] "I knew a man who did his drinking secretly and his reeling in public, and thought he was fooling everybody." — *Eben Holden*.

[3] Spurgeon.

28 And [r] fear not / be not afraid of them which kill the body, but are not able to kill the soul: but rather fear him [s] which is able to destroy both soul and body in [t] hell.

29 Are not two sparrows sold for a farthing? and [not] one of them shall [not] fall on the ground without your Father:

30 But / but [u] the very hairs of your head are all numbered.

r Isai. 8. 12, 13 & 51. 12, 13. Jer. 1. 8. 1 Pet. 3. 14. Cp. 2 Macc. 6. 26 & 7. 29. *s* James 4. 12. *t* See ch. 5. 29 (& mg. for mg.). *u* See 1 Sam. 14. 45.

often used in the East from which to proclaim important official edicts and to announce the hour of prayer."[1]

Syrian Sparrow.

THIRD ENCOURAGEMENT: THE IMPOTENCE OF THEIR ENEMIES.

28. **And fear not.** Do not be afraid of them **which kill the body**, as they will try to do, and may accomplish; as they will succeed in doing to your Master. **But are not able to kill the soul.** They cannot make you sin, or deny your Master, or give up your faith and love and religious life; they cannot destroy your character, all that makes life worth living, and makes you heirs of eternal life. They can send you to heaven and glory; but they have no power to bring you to eternal destruction.

But . . . fear, reverence, stand in awe of, so as to trust and obey him, to realize that he is all-powerful. **Him**, not Satan, who can do no more, or different, evil than his human servants; but God, **which is able to destroy both soul and body in hell** (Gehenna, see on 5: 22). If you fail in your duty, if you yield to temptation, and to escape persecution deny your Saviour, or pervert the truth. The fear of God conquers the fear of man. Every one fears something, and his character, and therefore his eternal destiny, is shown by what he fears.[2] John Wesley declared that if he could find one hundred men who feared nothing but sin, he would move the world. He found them, and moved the world.

FOURTH ENCOURAGEMENT: GOD'S LOVING CARE OVER THEM.

29. **Are not two sparrows** (*στρουθία*). The word is a diminutive, *little sparrows*, and carries with it a touch of tenderness. At the present day, in the markets of Jerusalem and Jaffa, long strings of little birds, sparrows and larks, are offered for sale, trussed on long wooden skewers.[3] **Sold for a farthing**, *ἀσσαρίου*, an *as*, one sixteenth of a denarius (translated "penny" in the New Test., and worth 16 or 17 cents), so that an *as*, translated farthing here, was about one

Sparrows in Market.

cent.[4] **And one of them . . . without your Father.** The same Father in heaven cares for you, as for the birds. (See on 6: 26–30.)

30. **The very hairs of your head are all**

[1] *Revision Com.*
[2] See *A Study of Fears*, by Pres. G. Stanley Hall.
[3] Prof. M. R. Vincent, *Word Studies.*
[4] Hastings, *Bib. Dic.*

31 Fear [ye] not therefore, [v] ye are of more value than many sparrows.
32 [w] [Whosoever / Every one] therefore [who] shall confess me before men, him will I [also] confess [also] before my Father which is in heaven.
33 But [x] whosoever shall deny me before men, [y] him will I also deny before my Father which is in heaven.
34 [z] Think not that I [am come / came] to send peace on [the] earth: [a] I came not to send peace, but a sword.

v ch. 6. 26 & 12. 12. *w* Cp. Rom. 10. 9, 10 & Heb. 10. 35 & Rev. 3. 5. *x* 2 Tim. 2. 12. 2 Pet. 2. 1. 1 John 2. 23. Cp. Mark 8. 38. *y* ch. 7. 23 & 25. 12. Luke 13. 25. *z* See Luke 12. 51–53. *a* Cp. Rev. 6. 4.

numbered, "counted and catalogued." It is said that there are 100,000 million million atoms in a cubic inch of gas, and each one made as perfect as a world. God is so infinite that all these least things are included in his knowledge and care and love.

31. **Fear ye not therefore.** God cannot care for these things, and neglect greater things, and **ye are of more value than many sparrows.** Even in the persecutions and sickness and sufferings which will come to you, you are still enfolded in the love of God, and he will make all things work together for your good.[1]

FIFTH ENCOURAGEMENT: CHRIST WILL ACKNOWLEDGE HIS FAITHFUL DISCIPLES AS HIS OWN.

32. **Whosoever therefore**, in view of the truths just stated. **Shall confess me**, ὁμολογήσει ἐν ἐμοί, "a peculiar but very significant expression. Lit., 'Confess *in* me.' The idea is that of confessing Christ out of a state of oneness with him. 'Abide in me, and being in me, confess me.' It implies identification of the confessor with the confessed, and thus takes confession out of the category of mere formal or verbal acknowledgment." [2] Thayer in his *Greek Lexicon* renders, "Confess in my case, or when my cause is at stake." Christ is confessed, (1) By informal and private acknowledgment. (2) By public profession in church. (3) By a Christlike life, a life so different in spirit and in act that men will take knowledge of us that we have been with Jesus. (4) *Publicly* in various ways before men; standing up for Jesus in all circumstances. **Before men.** Before friends and enemies, kings, judges, mobs, in danger and in peace, publicly and privately. **Him will I confess also before my Father.** I will acknowledge him as my sincere disciple, for that is true. He has borne the test, he has proved his discipleship, and he shall be acknowledged as a disciple, tried and true, and receive the welcome "Good and faithful servant, enter into the joy of your Lord."

33. **But whosoever shall deny me.** (1) Christ is denied by words. (2) By rejecting him as our Lord and Saviour. (3) By taking sides with the world against him in amusements, business principles, social customs. (4) By conduct unworthy of Christ and contrary to his teachings. (5) By silence when we ought to speak. (6) By neglecting or refusing publicly to confess him. Denying Christ usually grows out of unbelief, or selfishness, or fear of man. **Him will I also deny before my Father.** He will state the fact that such persons are not his disciples. He does not "deny" them because he is revengeful, but because he is truthful and cannot say that persons are his disciples who are not.

SIXTH ENCOURAGEMENT: CONFLICT IS INEVITABLE, BUT IT IS THE WAY TO VICTORY.

34. **Think not that I am come to send**, βαλεῖν, to cast, to fling, as if peace could be flung upon the **earth** from heaven; as if it were an angel, or a new world, or anything that could be given at once. Peace cannot come to the soul or the world in that way. "A picture seems to have been present to our Saviour's thoughts. An indefinite multitude of people were grouped together; and all were on the tiptoe of expectation. What is it that is about to happen? Is it the reign of peace that is just about to be inaugurated and consummated? Is there to be henceforth only unity and amity? As they muse in their hearts, and debate with their lips, lo, a sword is flung into the midst of them!" [3] **I came not to send**, to fling, **peace, but a sword.** That must inevitably be the first result of his coming. He brings peace. He is the Prince of peace; the final result of his coming will be peace. But the world will not receive it. Evil is so intrenched in the customs, the fashions, the institutions, the methods, the prejudices, the government, the business of the world, that whatever or whoever comes to right the wrongs, and change all these things so that they shall become like those of the kingdom of heaven, and thus bring peace, will be opposed to the utmost. This is a universal principle. First, disturbance, overturning, discussing, criticising, unsettling, as the way to better things. This used

[1] Susan Coolidge's *Poems*, "A Wonderful Thought." The anonymous poem, *He Careth for Me.*

[2] Prof. M. R. Vincent.

[3] Morison.

35 For I [am come / came] to [b] set a man at variance against his father, and the daughter against her mother, and the daughter in law against her mother in law:

36 [c] [And / and] a man's foes *shall be* they of his own household.

37 [d] He that loveth father or mother more than me is not worthy of me: and he that loveth son or daughter more than me is not [e] worthy of me.

38 And [f] he that [taketh / doth] not take his cross, and [g] [followeth / follow] after me, is not worthy of me.

39 [h] He that findeth his life shall lose it: and he that loseth his life for my sake shall find it.

z See on ver. 34. *b* ver. 21. Cp. Mic. 7. 6. *c* Cited from Mic. 7. 6. Cp. Ps. 41. 9 & 55. 12, 13. John 13. 18. *d* Luke 14. 26. *e* Cp. Wisd. 3. 5. *f* ch. 16. 24. Mark 8. 34. Luke 9. 23 & 14. 27. *g* ch. 9. 9. John 8. 12 & 12. 26 & 21. 19. *h* ch. 16. 25. Mark 8. 35. Luke 9. 24 & 17. 33. John 12. 25.

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to discourage me, but now I see that it means better things, it means steps toward perfection, it means peace at last.[1]

35. **For I am come to set a man at variance,** etc. See on ver. 21. **Daughter in law,** *νύμφην*, bride, the son's bride.

36. **And a man's foes shall be they of his own household.** Because there the conflicting opinions come into closest collision. This has been, and often still is, one of the greatest obstacles in the way of becoming Christians. Household, in the application of this truth, includes not only the family, but also the circle of intimate friends, schoolmates, shopmates, those in business relations.

37. **He that loveth father . . . more than me.** The meaning of this is clear. Christ must be loved *supremely*, or he is not loved at all as a disciple. But the more one loves Christ the more he will love father and mother, son or daughter. That love invariably uplifts, purifies, transfigures all human love; for we are to love one another even as Christ loves us, and by loving him we learn most of his infinite love. We cannot love friends too much if only Jesus and the Father are loved more.[2] **Is not worthy of me.** To be my disciple, to be associated with me in my work, to receive my reward; for he has not of my spirit, my character, my aims.

38. **He that taketh not his cross.** "The Roman custom obliged the crucified to carry their own cross to the place of punishment. To this custom reference is here made. The meaning of the symbol is, whoever is not willing freely to deny himself, even unto death, and that the most painful and shameful, is not worthy of him,"[3] for they have not his spirit, his principles which led him to the cross for love of men, and duty toward God. (1) All self-denials for Jesus' sake are a taking up of the cross. The cross is the symbol of death, and the spirit of taking up the cross implies the willingness to suffer for Jesus even unto death. But often many small self-denials, a continual enduring of little crosses, are more difficult to bear than martyrdom, and are as real a sacrifice of the life to Jesus. (2) Each one must take up *his own* cross; the one the good Father lays upon him. Each cross bore its own inscription and the reason why it was borne. (3) He must take it up voluntarily. (4) He must *bear it after Christ*, in Christ's spirit, in his way, in doing his work. (5) Every person needs a cross to make him better in this world and fit him for heaven. No true life is lived without some cross. (6) There is always a crown surmounting the cross.[4]

39. **He that findeth his life shall lose it.** Repeated in Matt. 16: 25; Luke 17: 33; John 12: 25. *Life* here is, in the original, the same word as *soul* in ver. 28. It means not mere existence, but the joy, happiness, objects of desire, blessedness, which make life worth living. To make this life the chief aim is to lose the very thing sought. The best things of life cannot be obtained in this way. "*All self-seeking is self-losing.* Even in spiritual things, he who is perpetually studying how to secure joy and peace *for himself* loses it." Out of this general principle grow the statements, "he that finds, or seeks as a chief end, the life of this world shall lose eternal life in the world to come," and he that finds, seeks as first and highest, makes it his aim

[1] See Carlyle's *Heroes and Hero Worship*, p. 121. "When Hercules turned the purifying river into King Augea's stables, I have no doubt that the confusion that resulted was considerable all around," etc.

[2] See a most beautiful illustration of this in Miss Havergal's *Kept for the Master's Use*, pp. 142–145.

[3] Abbott.

[4] See Hawthorne's *Mosses from an Old Manse*, "The Celestial Railroad," for those who would reach the city without bearing the cross. *The Cross Bearer*, an effective series of illustrations on different ways of bearing the cross. The volume *The Changed Cross*. The legend of Christoforus, in Mrs. Jameson's *Sacred and Legendary Art*. Peter Bayne's *Christian Life*, chap. i.

40 ¶ [i] He that receiveth you receiveth me, and [j] he that receiveth me receiveth him that sent me.

41 [k] He that receiveth a prophet in the name of a prophet shall receive a prophet's reward; and he that receiveth a righteous man in the name of a righteous man shall receive a righteous man's reward.

42 And [l] whosoever shall give to drink unto one of [m] these little ones a cup of cold *water* water only, in the name of a disciple, verily I say unto you, he shall in no wise lose his reward.

i Luke 10. 16. John 13. 20. Gal. 4. 14. Cp. ver. 20 & ch. 18. 5 & 25. 40. *j* Mark 9. 37. Luke 9. 48. Cp. John 12. 44, 45. *k* 1 Kin. 17. 10–15 & 18. 4. 2 Kin. 4. 8. Cp. 3 John 5–8. *l* ch. 25. 35, 40. Mark 9. 41. Heb. 6. 10. *m* ch. 18. 10.

to find, the lower earthly life, shall lose the higher and spiritual life. The life, the soul, is lost when all is lost that gives it value.[1]

SEVENTH ENCOURAGEMENT: THEY THUS BECAME THE REPRESENTATIVES OF CHRIST.

40. **He that receiveth you receiveth me.** Because you are my representatives. Whosoever, therefore, gives you entertainment and hospitality really entertains me, in whose name and on whose errand you come. And in whatever way they treat you, they are treating me. **And he that receiveth me receiveth him that sent me.** You are therefore embassadors and representatives of the Father in heaven. This gave dignity and authority to their work. It comforted them in all their trials.

41. To make this more clear, and perhaps to encourage the people to treat the apostles as his representatives, he employs a familiar example. **He that receiveth a prophet.** One commissioned of God to make known his will to men. **In the name of a prophet.** Because he is a prophet, because he is the messenger of God. **Shall receive a prophet's reward.** The reward a prophet receives (not the one he gives); see illustration in 2 Kings, 4 : 1–7. **A righteous man's reward.** That reward is a perfect character (Col. 1 : 22); an entrance into the kingdom, the favor of God, larger usefulness, fuller joys, deeper peace, a home with God forever. He shall receive this reward because it proves that he has the same character, however obscure or unknown he may be.

42. **Shall give . . . unto one of these little ones,** the youngest, the most insignificant, and poor; those who cannot be prophets, but can only minister unto them; who cannot do great deeds of righteousness, but can only show their heart and desires by receiving the righteous, welcoming, supporting, and encouraging them. **A cup of cold water only.** The smallest and most inexpensive gift, but the one needed, and helpful. **In the name of a disciple.** Because he is a disciple of Jesus, because he would serve the Master in the person of the disciple. The act would thus express honor and love to Jesus and his cause. **He shall in no wise lose his reward.** The reward shall be the same that would be given for the same service to the Master himself, — his loving approval, the privilege of aiding his cause, a larger heart.[2]

[1] Compare Plato's *Gorgias*, 512.

[2] Lowell's *Poems*, "Vision of Sir Launfal;" Longfellow's *Poems*, "The Legend Beautiful." The poem "Wrought into Gold," in Peloubet's *Suggestive Illustrations on Matthew*, p. 211.

CHAPTER 11.

Section X. — JESUS AND JOHN THE BAPTIST.

1. The Two Scenes: Jesus in Galilee, John in Macherus, vers. 1, 2.
2. The Discouraged Prophet, An Eclipse of Faith, vers. 2, 3.
3. How Jesus cured Discouragement and Doubt, vers. 4–6.
4. Discourse of Jesus concerning John, vers. 7–19.

Time.

Vers. 2–19 belong to the summer of A. D. 28, about the middle of the ministry of Jesus.

Place.

Somewhere in Galilee, during one of Jesus' missionary tours.

John in prison since March, A. D. 28.

Vers. 20–30 belong to Perea, more than a year later.

Section XI. — WARNINGS AND INVITATIONS, vers. 20–30.

1 And it came to pass, when Jē'sus had made an end of commanding his twelve disciples, he departed thence to teach and [to] preach in their cities.

2 [n] Now when John [had] heard [o] in the prison the works of [p] [the] Christ, he sent [two of by] [q] his disciples,

n For vers. 2–19, see Luke 7. 18–35. *o* ch. 14. 3. Cp. ch. 4. 12. *p* See ch. 1. 17. *q* See ch. 9. 14.

I. TWO SCENES. — A CONTRAST.

First Scene: Jesus Teaching and Working successfully in Galilee, ver. 1.

1. **And it came to pass**, etc. This verse is really the conclusion of chapter 10, according to the harmonists, and belongs to the winter of A. D. 29, several months after the delegation from John to Jesus (vers. 2–19). The disciples went forth to preach and work miracles throughout Galilee, preparing the way for Jesus by awakening an interest in the new prophet. But it equally well describes the work of Jesus in the Galilean tour during which Jesus received the message from John. It was summer in the most beautiful and fertile part of Palestine. Peace and plenty were everywhere. Jesus was moving about the country, healing the sick, teaching the people, accompanied by the twelve apostles, attracting crowds, making many disciples. Luke 7: 21, 22 gives a sketch of this attractive picture. The career of Jesus at this time, with little apparent opposition, was that of a popular and successful prophet.

Second Scene: John the Baptist in a Dungeon at Macherus. About one hundred miles to the southeast of Galilee, in the strong fortress and castle of Măchē'rŭs, on the borders of Arabia, eight or nine miles east of the northern end of the Dead Sea, John the Baptist had been lying in a dungeon for several months like a caged eagle. Among mountains higher than those around Jerusalem rises from a valley "a long, flat ridge, more than a mile long and quite difficult of access, all of which was made a strong fortress. From this ridge rises a high, conical hill, the top of which is one hundred yards in diameter, and which was fortified as an impregnable citadel. In this citadel, besides a very deep well, and a very large and deep cemented cistern, are now found 'two dungeons, one of them deep and its sides scarcely broken in,' which have 'small holes still visible in the masonry, where staples of wood and iron had once been fixed. One of these must surely have been the prison house of John the Baptist.'"[1] John, on account of his faithfulness, had been cast into the dungeon, and was thus compelled to cease from his work and languish for long days in forced inactivity. For as Elijah had reproved Ahab, so John had reproved Herod for his unnatural crimes, not for the sake of reproving, but because Herod's crimes, like Ahab's, were bringing ruin upon the nation. Ar'ĕtăs, king of Arabia, indignant at the affront Herod had put upon him in divorcing his wife, the daughter of Aretas, and sending her home, had declared war, and at the very time of John's reproof, preparations for war were actively going on. John sought to stop the flood of horrors the war would roll upon the people.[2]

II. THE DISCOURAGED PROPHET; AN ECLIPSE OF FAITH, vers. 2, 3.

2. **When John had heard in the prison**, from some of his disciples who had seen what Jesus did, and showed him (Luke) **the works of**

[1] Canon Tristram.

[2] See Stalker's very suggestive *The Two St. Johns.*

3 And said unto him, Art thou *r* he that should come, or do we *s* look we for another?

r John 4. 25 & 6. 14 & 11. 27. Cp. ch. 3. 11 & Gen. 49. 10? & Deut. 18. 15, 18 & Ps. 118. 26 & Dan. 7. 13 & Rom. 5. 14, *al.* *s* Cp. Luke 3. 15.

Christ, his miracles, his teachings, his feasting with publicans and sinners, his manner of life among the people, his growing popularity, **he sent two of his disciples** as a delegation with this message: —

3. **Art thou he that should come?** Are you really the expected Messiah, the one whose way I have been preparing, or **do we look for another** (ἕτερον) of a different kind?

The sending of the delegation with this message shows that the brave and true prophet and martyr was in the shadow of a great doubt. Almost all active, earnest, enthusiastic reformers, men of great and stirring deeds, have had their seasons of discouragement and depression. Moses, when the people complained in the desert, himself complained to God, "I am not able to bear all this people alone, because it is too heavy for me" (Num. 11: 10–15). So David said, "O Lord, why hidest thou thyself in times of trouble?" (Ps. 10: 1.) Elijah, after his mighty deed on Carmel, lay down under the "juniper" tree, and wished to die. Almost every worker for God has at some time been with Bunyan's Christian in Doubting Castle of Giant Despair. No wonder, then, that the young prophet, John the Baptist, had for a brief time this bitter experience, and, like Hopeful, forgot that he had the key of deliverance in his bosom.

THE CAUSES OF HIS DISCOURAGEMENT. When we consider John's circumstances in the light of what we have experienced and observed of human nature, we cannot be far wrong in our judgment of the causes of his despondency. Stalker, in *The Two St. Johns*, well says, "Those who are taught by experience are well aware that the soul has its fainting fits, and that one whose faith at one time is so great as to remove mountains may at another time be weak and unbelieving."

(1) Physical weakness and ill health, caused by the reaction from his intense labors and from confinement in a damp, unhealthy dungeon. "He was a Bedouin of the desert taken from the open air and put in prison. He lost the rush of the water over the fords of the Jordan, the song of birds, the rising and setting sun. His muscles relaxed and his lungs lost their power, and the trouble of the body reaches the soul." It takes more religion to make a dyspeptic smile than a perfectly healthy person to rejoice in Pisgah glories. "Andrew Fuller, Thomas Scott, William Cowper, Thomas Boston, David Brainerd, Philip Melanchthon, were mighty men for God, but all of them illustrations of the fact that a man's soul is not independent of his physical health. An eminent physician gave as his opinion that no man ever died a greatly triumphant death whose disease was below the diaphragm." [1]

(2) The apparent failure of his life, of his plans and hopes, no doubt greatly increased his depression. His life was ending in his very prime, after only two years of labor for his Lord. "No other figure in the New Testament is so dramatic or picturesque as that of John the Baptist . . . standing in the dawn of the new morning, and looking eastward out of the darkness toward the place where the sun will rise, and then falling back into the shadow while the sun illuminates the world. That is the nobility of the Baptist,— to efface himself and find significance in that which is to come after him. . . . He and his work are to pass away and to be forgotten; after him are to come those that are preferred before him; but the better that is to come is to come only because he has done his best. . . . That is what tempts many persons to despair and scorn about the movement of the world." [2]

(3) Jesus in Galilee, with his twelve workingmen, presented so different a picture from John's ideal of the Messiah. Where was the great conqueror, breaking the chains of a nation, hurling monarchs from their thrones, shattering his enemies like a potter's vessel with a rod of iron, overturning the evils of the day, revolutionizing the world, bringing in the promised glories, crying to Israel, "Arise, shine; for thy Light is come"? John was in prison for his faithful reproof. Can it be that Jesus under the same Herod was unfaithful, and therefore living in peace? Why did not Jesus' lightning strike the wicked king?

(4) His strange and unaccountable neglect by Jesus. Only one hundred miles away from his dreary castle, among the lovely hills of Galilee, Jesus, the Messiah, the Redeemer from God, the glorious King, is preaching the gospel for the poor, deliverance to the captive. Why does he not deliver the captive, his friend and helper?

(5) Another cause was the depression produced by reaction after a long-continued nervous strain in his exalted labors. The Valley of Humiliation and of the Shadow of Death is often but a brief journey from the Land of Beulah and the Delectable Mountains, as almost every preacher has found.

(6) The narrow outlook. It was dark for John. His dungeon walls were close by, however bright

[1] John Watson (Ian Maclaren) in address to the Yale students.

[2] From *Afternoons in the College Chapel*, by Prof. Francis G. Peabody, of Harvard.

4 And Jē'sus answered and said unto them, Go your way and shew (tell) Jŏhn again those (the) things which ye do hear and see:

5 [t] The (the) blind receive their sight, and the lame walk, the lepers are cleansed, and the deaf hear, and the dead are raised up, and [u] the poor have the gospel (good tidings) preached to them.

6 And blessed is he, (he,) whosoever shall [v] find none occasion of stumbling (not be offended) in me.

t See Luke 7. 22. *u* Isai. 61. 1 (mg.). Luke 4. 18. Cp. ch. 5. 3 & James 2. 5. *v* ch. 13. 57 (mg.) & 24. 10 & 26. 31 (mg.). Isai. 8. 14, 15. Mark 6. 3 (mg.). John 6. 61 & 16. 1.

the sun might shine beyond his ken. In his own seeming failure, he might not see signs of success elsewhere. In the smoke of the battle, the peace after victory seems afar off. Narrow outlooks often dishearten us, when broader views would give us courage and hope.[1]

III. HOW JESUS CURED DISCOURAGEMENT AND DOUBT, vers. 4–6.

"He who, though perplexed in faith, remains pure in deeds, will ultimately fight his way through doubt and come safely out on the other side."[2]

4. **Jesus answered, . . . Go and shew John again those things which ye do hear,** his teachings, and the story of what Jesus had done, told by many witnesses, **and see,** for in that same hour he cured many (Luke). He kept on doing his work.

5. **The blind receive their sight,** etc., a great variety of cures, of many forms of disease, as we have seen recorded in the previous chapters.

There was nothing too hard for his power. Each disease was typical of some corresponding moral healing from the diseases of sin. All of them were expressions of his goodness and love.

Moreover, these are the very things that Isaiah foretold of the Messianic times (Isai. 35 : 4–6 ; 29 : 18, 19).

The poor, the poor in spirit, poor in this world's goods, the broken-hearted, the captives, those bound in the chains of sin, **have the gospel,** glad tidings, **preached to them.** The good news was "without money and without price," and none were so poor that they could not receive its blessings and be children and heirs of God. This is one of the strongest proofs of the truth of the Gospel, one of the surest marks of the true Messiah and the true church.[3]

6. **And blessed is he, whosoever shall not be offended in me.** Shall find no occasion of stumbling in me, shall see how my work and method of founding the kingdom, however differing from preconceived opinions, is the true way for the Messiah, the only one in which his mission could be fulfilled, and the only one foretold by the prophets. Many, indeed, did stumble at the way Jesus represented the Messiahship.[4] Note how Jesus relieved his despondency, and will relieve ours.

> "Who comes to God an inch, through doubtings dim,
> In blazing light God will advance a mile to him."[5]

(1) He did not condemn him for having these surface questionings and doubts.

(2) The very realization of his doubt, and the pain it caused, was a hopeful sign. "Thou hast made us for thyself, and unquiet is our heart till it rests in thee."

(3) Jesus did not work any new miracle or utter new truths, but set out the same old truths in a new light, with new clearness. So we are to expect no voice from heaven assuring us that we are God's children ; no angel to show us the Book of Life with our name in it ; no messenger to bring new proofs of the Bible ; no burning bush to assure us of the presence of our Heavenly Father ; but the same old truths with new treasures, the old promises with new depths of meaning, the old Bible in new light.

(4) The good deeds which Jesus did were the proofs of his Messiahship. And what the gospel has done during the past ages, and is doing now, is the invincible proof that it is the true religion from a

[1] See Arthur Helps' *Friends in Council*, on the three kinds of prophets.

[2] Stalker.

[3] In *Quo Vadis*, especially, and in Farrar's *Darkness to Dawn*, we see the change the Gospel has wrought for the poor.

[4] THE MODERN AGE OF DOUBT. "Stepping into the broad field of general reading we see that we are living in an age of doubt. . . . Its coat of arms is an interrogation point rampant, above three bishops dormant, and its motto is *Query ?*" "In the lay sermons and essays of Huxley, Tyndall, and Frederick Harrison," "these knights-errant of Doubting Castle," "skepticism appears militant and trenchant." "Over the fragmentary but majestic life philosophies of Carlyle and Emerson lying in the disarray of stones hewn for a temple yet unbuilt, imaginative skepticism hangs like a cloud. Over Carlyle it is the shadow of a noonday tempest full of darkness and tumult and muttering thunder. Over Emerson it floats like a cumulus of evening vapors, luminous and beautiful." Compare Tennyson's *Despair* and *Sea Dreams*. "Doubt, as we are thinking of it, is not a crime, but a malady." — Henry Van Dyke, in *Gospel for an Age of Doubt*.

[5] Sayings of Rabia, in Trench's *Poems*.

7 ¶ And as (they departed, these went their way,) Jē'sus began to say unto the multitudes concerning Jŏhn, What went ye out [w] into the wilderness to (see?) behold? [x] A reed shaken with the wind?

w ch. 3. 1. Luke 1. 80. *x* Cp. Eph. 4. 14 & James 1. 6.

good God, our Father in heaven. Its transforming power, its miracles of grace, the blessings it confers upon every nation which receives it, and in proportion to the perfectness of its acceptance, the fact that it is doing to-day greater things than were done in Jesus' time, as he himself promised, — these things remove doubt. "The church," says Stalker, "which saves most souls, and does most to sweeten and purify domestic and political life, is the church which is doing most to counterwork skepticism."

(5) What a religion does for the poor is one of the surest tests of its origin. Compare the advantages of the poor in Christian lands with their condition in all others. In no other lands are the poor so near the rich in advantages. The Gospel is for the poor; they can worship in the most expensive buildings. Printing has made Bibles so cheap that the poorest can read them, and learn to read them in free schools which are better than the private schools of the rich. Colleges are endowed so that the poor can have the highest education. Public libraries and galleries of art are open to all. The poor can ride as fast in railroad cars as the rich, can have their daily papers, can enjoy music and home comforts such as only kings and princes enjoyed a few hundred years ago. Much is yet to be done in carrying out the spirit of the Gospel; but it is well to see what wonders have already been accomplished.

(6) Jesus has proved himself able and willing to help, by having already bestowed upon others the very blessings we need. He is a tried and proved Saviour.

(7) The proofs that Jesus was the Messiah showed John that his life was not a failure. He had accomplished the great object of his life. So we may be sure that, whatever our seeming failures in life, every sincere worker for Jesus shall win the crown of success. Here or hereafter, it is sure to come. No life lived for Jesus is a tragedy or a failure.

(8) John gained his wider outlook, and it shone with hope. We, too, in Jesus see the wider vision, immortal life and service beyond the grave; and through the windows opened by Isaiah and by John in Revelation we see the new earth, and know that our life and work shall end in success. A wider outlook upon what God is doing elsewhere, upon the progress of his kingdom in other places and by other means, will often remove the doubts from those whose outlook is narrowed by immediate surroundings of sorrow and sin.[1]

IV. DISCOURSE OF JESUS CONCERNING JOHN, vers. 7–19.

7. **Began to say unto the multitudes concerning John.** In answer to their thoughts and

Papyrus Reed.

secret questionings. They might imagine from John's message that the Baptist wavered in his faith, and that his imprisonment had shaken his constancy, and therefore that he was not so great a prophet after all. Our Lord reminds them of what John was. **What went ye out into the wilderness**, where John had preached, **to see?**

[1] In Edwin Arnold's *Light of Asia*, the king in his vision sees seven great fears, importing ruin to him and his kingdom. But his wise men show him that each several fear was in reality a great joy. He had misinterpreted the vision.

8 But what went ye out for to see? A man clothed in soft raiment? behold, raiment? Behold, they that wear soft clothing raiment are in kings' houses.

9 But what wherefore went ye out? for to see? a prophet? yea, Yea, I say unto you, and much more than a prophet.

10 For this This is he, of whom it is written, [z] Behold, I send my messenger before thy face, which Who shall prepare thy way before thee.

11 Verily I say unto you, Among them that are born of women there hath not risen arisen a greater than Jŏhn the Băp'tĭst: notwithstanding yet he that is least but little in the kingdom of heaven is greater than he.

12 [a] And from the days of Jŏhn the Băp'tĭst until now the kingdom of heaven suffereth violence, and the violent men of violence take it by force.

y ch. 14. 5 & 21. 26. Luke 1. 76. *z* Mark 1. 2. Cited from Mal. 3. 1. *a* Luke 16. 16.

A reed shaken with the wind? The reed of Egypt and Palestine is a very tall cane, growing twelve feet high, with a magnificent panicle of blossom at the top, and so slender and yielding that it will lie perfectly flat under a gust of wind, and immediately resume its upright position.[1] "So far from being a *reed*, shaken by the wind of popular opinion, John was a *rock*, which stood unmoved though beaten by storms of suffering."[2] This is one of the common aspersions which men are apt to cast on those who become popular, that they bend to the popular breeze; and it is one of their dangers. "An Arab told a friend of mine that 'the reed shaken with the wind' was the musical reed pipe made to vibrate with the wind blown into it. 'Did you go out to hear a musician discourse sweet sounds?'"

8. **A man clothed in soft raiment.** Luxurious or gorgeous clothing — a sign of an effeminate and voluptuous nature, or a sycophant, who would flatter for the hope of gain. Contrast this with the rigorous fare and simple garb of John as described in Matt. 3: 4. So the next accusation of the reformer, and his next danger, is that "he is making friends of the rich, and feathering his own nest." **Behold,** etc. No such man as this was the wilderness prophet. If you wished to find such men, you would go to the palace of Herod, where they are gorgeously apparelled.

9. **A prophet? yea, . . . and more than a prophet.** (1) Because himself the object of prophecy; (2) because he pointed out the Messiah, whom others only foretold, and saw him whom kings and prophets desired to see; and (3) chiefest of all, because his position was nearest the threshold of the kingdom, and he, more than they all, helped to usher it in.

10. **This is he, of whom it is written. In** Mal. 3: 1. **Behold, I send my messenger before thy face,** etc. An allusion to one who went before an Eastern monarch to remove all obstacles out of his way. See on 3: 3. He was the forerunner of Jesus, and therefore one more proof that Jesus was the Messiah.

11. **There hath not risen a greater** (prophet) **than John the Baptist,** in character, in work, in nearness to God, in position, in privilege, in success. **Notwithstanding he that is least in the kingdom of heaven,** the New Kingdom, the New Dispensation, **is greater than he.** Not greater in character, but in privilege, in experience, in the grace and truth which came by Jesus Christ. He belongs to a higher dispensation, with larger influences of the Spirit, blessings beyond the comprehension of any in the previous dispensation. The least seed grown above ground is greater than the greatest still beneath the soil. The child on a hilltop can see a wider vision of the earth than the tallest man in the valley. So we may say that the child to-day has more knowledge, and stands farther in advance, in chemistry, geography, history, in the blessings and comforts of civilization, than the greatest sages of the past, who had far more genius and intellect.

> "What sages would have died to learn
> Is taught by cottage dames."

12. **And from the days of John the Baptist.** Less than two years before, when he began the preparatory work for the new kingdom. **The kingdom of heaven suffereth violence,** etc. The metaphor is that of a city to which long siege has been laid, but which at last by one great, enthusiastic, impetuous assault, had been entered by the victorious troops. John and Christ are the beginning of a new and intensely earnest effort to take possession of the kingdom of heaven, so poorly represented by the Jews, and make it into the real, glorious kingdom of heaven. It was like the kernel of the seed in the springtime, with one supreme effort bursting through the hard shell where for long years it had been

[1] Tristram. [2] Bp. Wordsworth.

13 [a] For all the prophets and the law prophesied until Jŏhn.
14 And if ye are willing to receive *it*, this is [b] E-lī'as, E-lī'jah, which was for is to come.
15 [c] He that hath ears to hear, let him hear.
16 ¶ But whereunto shall I liken this generation? It is like unto children sitting in the marketplaces, and calling markets, which call unto their fellows,
17 And saying, and say, We have piped unto you, and ye have did not danced; dance; we have mourned unto you, wailed, and ye have did not lamented. mourn.
18 For Jŏhn came [d] neither eating [e] nor drinking, and they say, He hath a devil.
19 The Son of man came [f] eating and drinking, and they say, Behold, a man gluttonous, gluttonous man, and a winebibber, [g] a friend of [h] publicans and sinners: But And [i] wisdom is justified of by her children. works.

a See on ver. 12. *b* ch. 17. 10–13. Mal. 4. 5. Mark 9. 11–13. Luke 1. 17. Cp. John 1. 21. *c* ch. 13. 9, 43. Luke 8. 8 & 14. 35. Rev. 2. 7, *al.* *d* ch. 3. 4. Mark 1. 6. *e* Luke 1. 15. *f* ch. 9. 10. Luke 7. 36 & 14. 1. John 2. 1 & 12. 2. *g* ch. 9. 11. Luke 15. 2 & 19. 7. *h* ch. 18. 17. Luke 5. 30, *al.* *i* Cp. Prov. 8. 1–36 & Wisd. 7. 22–8. 1 & 11. 1, *al.* & Ecclus. 1. 1–20, *al.* & Luke 11. 49.

confined, and starting forth on its new development as a great tree. **The violent take it by force.** It is gained only by supreme earnestness; the intense exertion of the whole nature. And this is true for all the disciples for all time, as well as for Jesus and for his forerunner John. "Good things are hard," says the Greek proverb.

13. **For all the prophets and the law prophesied.** Foretold the Messiah and his kingdom, and prepared the way for it. They, the preparatory dispensation, were *until John;* men just went on quietly in the old paths, waiting for what was to come. Since John came, all has changed: the "kingdom" *has come.*

14. **If ye will receive it.** If you can understand what at first would seem inconsistent with this truth, that John should be in prison. But in reality his great preparatory work was accomplished. **This is Elias** (*Elijah*), **which was for to come.** Who was to make the final preparations for the new kingdom (Mal. 4 : 5).

15. **He that hath ears to hear,** etc. He whose mind is open to the truth, whose understanding is not dulled by prejudice or sin, who has been prepared by earnest seeking after better things, — he can see the deeper meaning of these sayings.[1] Many persons are deaf to certain sounds. A man who could hear perfectly well the lower notes of a piano, heard not a sound from the upper notes. He never heard a bird sing.

16. **Whereunto shall I liken this generation?** The people of the time when Jesus lived. **It is like unto children,** etc. Jesus "pictured a group of little children playing at make-believe marriages and funerals. First they acted a marriage procession; some of them piping on instruments of music, while the rest were expected to leap and dance. In a perverse mood, however, these refused to respond, but stood still and looked discontented. So the little pipers changed their game, and proposed a funeral. They began to imitate the loud wailing of Eastern mourners. But again they were thwarted, for their companions refused to chime in with the mournful cry and to beat their breasts."[2] **Markets,** market-places, the open places or squares in the towns, where citizens assembled, markets were opened, and children resorted for play.

17. **Piped,** played on a pipe, a flutelike instrument, two kinds of which are portrayed on the Egyptian monuments, one like our flute without keys, the other with reed or vibrating tongues, like a clarinet.[3] This familiar scene illustrates the fact that the rulers were bound to find fault with whatever way the New Kingdom was presented to them. They did not wish any reformation, and however it came they would find some reason to reject it.

18. **For John came neither eating nor drinking,** like other people. He drank no wine (Luke 1 : 15) and was very plain and abstemious in his eating, his diet being locusts and wild honey (3 : 4). His whole manner of living was ascetic in the extreme. There was great power in this method of preaching. It drew crowds. It touched many hearts. It brought many to repentance. But the rulers and the nation as a whole were not pleased, and did not repent. They found fault with John, and rejected his message. They said, **He hath a devil,** a demon, that he was crazy, and under the influence of bad spirits. Who in a sound mind would reject all that was pleasant, and spend his life like John?

19. Jesus tried a very different method; he came

[1] See on 13 : 19, and Prof. W. H. Thomson's *Parables in their Home.* Prof. Tyndall on *Sound.*

[2] Donald Fraser, *Metaphors in the Gospels.*

[3] See Hastings, *Bib. Dic.*, "Music."

20 [j] Then began he to upbraid the cities wherein most of his mighty works were done, because they repented not:

21 [k] Woe unto thee, Chŏrā'zĭn! woe unto thee, Bĕthsā'ĭdȧ! for if the mighty works, which were done in you, had been done in [l] Tȳre and Sī'dŏn, which were done in you, they would have repented long ago in sackcloth and ashes.

j Cp. Ps. 81. 11–13. Isai. 1. 2–5. *k* For vers. 21–24, see Luke 10. 12–15. *l* ch. 15. 21. Mark 3. 8. Cp. Isai. 23. Ezek. 28. 2–24. Amos 1. 9, 10.

eating and drinking, he lived like others, he was one of the people, he shared their customary food and drink. For he was **the Son of man**, and lived like a common man. "He came as the Son of man, and therefore he came to show that the common life of all men could be lived with perfect holiness, and that seclusion and asceticism were not necessary as universal conditions." **And they say, Behold a man gluttonous**, etc. This was not true, but was their misrepresentation. No matter how God invited them to come into his kingdom, they were determined not to go.

Jesus' method was much more difficult than John's. It is much easier to seem holy and godly when apart from the common business and pleasures of men, living in a theoretical world, and not in a real world, apart from many temptations and influences that pervade society, and require a constant decision of practical questions. But it is as much better and higher as it is more difficult. Most men must live in the world, and the problem of the great majority of men is how to live righteously in a wicked world, how to be like a ship in the ocean without letting the ocean into the ship, to be like the flower in the coal mine, perfectly white amid the blackness.

Wisdom is justified. Wisdom, the divine wisdom, is justified, proved right, accepted as wise and good in all she does, in both ways of appealing to men, by **her children**, by all who are wise, "for they know that wisdom is πολυποίκιλος, 'richly variegated,' 'of many colors' (Eph. 3: 10)." This unreasonable opposition to revivals, to religion, to reform, is common even to this day.

Section XI.—WARNINGS AND INVITATIONS, vers. 20–30.

Time.

December A. D. 29, in connection with the sending out and return of the seventy, almost a year and a half after the first part of the chapter.

Place.

Somewhere in Perea, on the way to Jerusalem.

I. WARNINGS, vers. 20–27.

Although that generation as a whole was determined not to accept of the kingdom of heaven, yet many individuals might be persuaded to forsake their sins and become disciples. Hence Jesus now presented to them two great motives which most appeal to men. Others had been presented in his teachings, his miracles, his character; but these higher motives had failed to lead them to repentance.

20. **Then began he**, for the first recorded time. He began to urge a new motive. **To upbraid.** Not abuse, or scold, but rebuke, blame, including both "pitying grief and indignation." It was necessary to strike hard in order to make an impression. It was like blasting rocks. **Wherein . . . his mighty works.** One of the six names given to miracles in the New Testament. It is commonly translated "miracles." It would include, also, such remarkable changes as had been made in Matthew, from a publican to an apostle. These mighty works were invincible proofs that Jesus was the Messiah, that his message was from God, that the gospel came to bless and help men. **Because they repented not**, even in the presence of the divine works whose object was to lead them to repentance. He saw them despising their opportunities, blinding their eyes, searing their consciences, rushing headlong to destruction, when help and salvation were at hand.

21. **Woe unto thee.** Not a wishing of woe to them, but a statement of the fact that woe must come to them if they kept on doing as they had done. **Chorazin.** The site of this city is uncertain, but it was probably at Keraseh, two miles from Tel Hûm, the probable site of Capernaum, a little way from the Sea of Galilee. **Bethsaida** (*house of fish*) was probably situated on both sides of the mouth of the Jordan where it enters the Sea of Galilee. It was the birthplace of Simon Peter, Andrew, and Philip. **If the mighty works, which were done in you.** None are recorded as done in Chorazin or Bethsaida, but

22 [m] But Howbeit I say unto you, It shall be more tolerable for [k] Tȳre and Sĭ'dŏn at [n] the day of judgment, judgement, than for you.

23 And thou, Căpĕr'-naŭm, [o] which art shalt thou be exalted unto heaven? thou shalt be brought go down [p] to hell: unto Hades: for if the mighty works, which have had been done in thee, had been Sodom which were done in Sodom, thee, it would have remained until this day.

24 [m] But Howbeit I say unto you, That that [q] it shall be more tolerable for the land of Sodom in [n] the day of judgment, judgement, than for thee.

25 [r] At that time season Jē'sus answered and said, I thank thee, O Father, [s] Lord of heaven and earth, because that [t] thou hast hid didst hide these things from the wise and prudent, understanding, and [u] hast revealed didst reveal them unto babes:

m Cp. Luke 12. 47, 48. *n* See Acts 17. 31. *o* Cited from Isai. 14. 13–15. Cp. Lam. 2. 1. Ezek. 26. 20, *al.* *p* ch. 16. 18. Luke 16. 23. Acts 2. 27. Rev. 1. 18, *al.* *q* ch. 10. 15. *r* For vers. 25–27, see Luke 10. 21, 22. *s* See Acts 17. 24. *t* Job 37. 24. 1 Cor. 1. 19–27. 2 Cor. 3. 14. *u* ch. 21. 16. Ps. 8. 2. Cp. ch. 13. 11 & 16. 17.

Jesus did a large number of miracles that were not recorded (Luke 4 : 23; John 21 : 25). **Had been done in Tyre and Sidon.** Two large and wealthy Gentile cities of Phœnicia, on the coast of the Mediterranean Sea, in the north of Palestine. They had all the abominations of heathen immorality. **Repented long ago in sackcloth and ashes.** The Oriental expressions of the deepest sorrow.

22. **It shall be more tolerable for Tyre and Sidon at the day of judgment, than for you.** All were to be punished for their sins, and their refusal to repent, and their rejection of salvation. But when the judgment is made as to their guilt, those who sinned against greater light and greater opportunities would have the greater guilt and suffer the severer punishment (Luke 12 : 47, 48). Resistance to light and privilege harden the heart and sear the conscience. Good soil, though full of weeds, is more hopeful than the desert. A poor eye is better than a good one blinded by the light.

23. **And thou, Capernaum** (the place of Christ's residence, and the centre of his miracles and teachings), **which art**, etc. The better reading is that of the R. V., "shalt thou be exalted unto heaven?" Do you expect, on account of your exalted privileges, whatever you do with them, that you will be high in the kingdom of heaven, honored and prospered, a capital city? Do you, the inhabitants, expect that you shall have the highest enjoyment and all the blessings of heaven, without regard to your character, because I have done so many wonderful works among you? **Shalt be brought down to hell.** To Hades, the abode of the dead; that is, shall be utterly destroyed. The woes came upon these cities.

Had been done in Sodom. One of the cities of the plain, whose very name is a synonym for the vilest sensuality and wickedness. Not ten righteous persons could be found within its walls (Gen. 18 : 16–29). **It would have remained,** instead of being consumed by fire and brimstone, so that no one knows the place where it once existed.

25. Here was a mystery. If Tyre, Sidon, and Sodom would have repented under better influences, why were they not bestowed upon them? Who can tell? Yet we see in individuals and in nations the same mysterious fact. Therefore **Jesus answered** the unspoken thoughts of the people about these things. He gave the only two answers which were possible under the circumstances.

(1) The first answer was that we must trust the goodness and love of God as to things which we cannot understand. **I thank thee.** Rather, "I assent to thee," "I cordially concur and approve." **O Father.** And therefore loving and good, full of tender mercies. **Lord of heaven and earth.** And therefore able to do all that love and goodness deem wise, and with a right to act according to his sovereign will. **Because thou hast hid these things.** The mysteries of the divine providence referred to above. **From the wise and prudent,** the understanding, the intellectual, because the solutions of these mysteries must be learned by faith, and by the heart, and by love quite as much as by the intellect. **And hast revealed them unto babes.** Those who have the childlike spirit, ready to learn and to trust. Wisdom and intellect are good and necessary, but they must be teachable and receptive, or they cannot understand the religion of Jesus. There never was greater need of this spirit than to-day, and there never was more of this spirit. The wonderful progress of the age is the result of the tendency, greater than ever before, to learn the exact facts, to listen to the voices of nature and of God.

This was a similar mystery to that to which he was replying. In this case they could see how it was right, and also the way of receiving the other mysteries of divine providence.

26 Even so, yea, Father; for so *v* it seemed good was well-pleasing in thy sight.

27 *w* All things are have been delivered unto me of my Father: and no man one knoweth the Son,*x* but save the Father; neither knoweth doth any man know the Father, save the Son, and he he *y* to whomsoever the Son will willeth to reveal *him.*

28 *z* Come unto *a* me, all ye ye that labour and are *b* heavy laden, and I will give you rest.

v Luke 12. 32. Gal. 1. 15. *w* See ch. 28. 18. *x* Cp. John 1. 18 & 6. 46 & 7. 29 & 8. 19 & 10. 15 & 17. 2. *y* Cp. John 17. 26. *z* John 7. 37. Cp. John 6. 37. *a* Cp. ver. 3. *b* Cp. ch. 23. 4. Luke 11. 46.

27. (2) The second answer was, **All things are delivered unto me of** (or by) **my Father.** Christ had control of all things, and could and would do what was best. It was not for want of goodness or power that things were not done differently. There is some wise reason for all these mysteries. You need not fear that God is dead,[1] or has lost control of the world. For even to me, whose love you can see, God has delivered all things. **And no man.** Rather, *no one*, neither man nor angel. **Knoweth the Son.** Comprehends fully his nature and his work. **But the Father.** Therefore Jesus must be divine. **Neither knoweth any man the Father, save the Son.** He only understands fully the infinite love, the far-reaching plans, the holy nature of the Father. **And he to whomsoever the Son will reveal him.** By his character, his teachings, and his wonderful works. Every one of these proved the wisdom and goodness of the Father who sent Jesus. If God is good and wise in all we can see, he must be good and wise in his other acts of which the reasons are unknown. It was thus that God gave faith to Job in the mystery of affliction sent to the good. He showed him that everywhere in his visible works he was wise and good. Therefore he must have the same qualities in his mysterious actions.

Fear as a Motive. Fear — not terror, not fright, but a clear apprehension of consequences — is a proper, a useful, and a powerful motive for doing right. The first need of a sinful soul, the first need of a nation, is a deep sense of sin and guilt, and of danger flowing from them, with also a way and a hope of a better life. "Aristotle's conception of education, as learning to fear in due proportion those things worthy of being feared, would not serve badly as a definition also of courage." Fear is the rudimentary organ, on the full development and subsequent reduction of which many of the best things in the soul are dependent. "A childhood too happy and careless and fearless is a calamity so great that prayer against it might stand in the old English service book beside the petition that our children be not poltroons."[2] "If the reply comes that there is no use in trying to frighten men into doing right, all I can say is that we are not trying to frighten men into doing right. I think we should all agree that there is very little virtue, and certainly no beauty, in rectitude that is compulsory. But if I were sick and you were to come to me and tell me that I was in a bad way, and try to alarm me into consulting a physician, you would think it a very inapposite reply for me to make to say that for you to alarm me about my health showed in you an exceedingly narrow and inconsiderate and antiquated temper, and that no man ever yet secured his health by attempts made to frighten him into recovery. You would answer, and very reasonably, that you had no expectation that frightening me would make me well, but that you thought that by appealing to the spot where I kept my anxieties I might be induced to put myself under the care of a physician, who would make me well."[3]

Distinguish carefully a motive that may lead a person to become a Christian from the motives which are the mainsprings of his Christian living after he has become one. As a Christian, higher motives of love, duty, honor, gratitude, move him more and more, and the consequences of sin less and less; as a steamship is started from the docks by tugs, which are left behind when her own machinery is fully at work; or, as a steamship with sails set is moved at first by wind and by steam, but, when under full headway, the wind may not be felt, as the machines do the whole work.

II. INVITATIONS, vers. 28–30.

In the previous verses Jesus urged men to leave the wrong way because of the consequences which were certain to follow sin. Now he attracts them by the blessings which follow right doing.

28. **Come unto me.** To where he was, to his person, to his heart, to his character, to his teaching and training, to his care, to his method of living, to his kingdom. It is only there that the blessing can be found. It is a personal invitation. **All ye that labour.** Those under the yoke, strug-

[1] See the figure which closes Zola's story *La Bête Humaine*, and the story of Luther's discouragement when his wife put on mourning, as if God were dead.

[2] Pres. G. Stanley Hall, *A Study of Fears.*

[3] C. H. Parkhurst, D. D.

29 Take my [c]yoke upon you, and [d]learn of me; for I am [e]meek and lowly in heart: and [f]ye shall find rest unto your souls.

c Ecclus. 51. 26. *d* John 13. 15. Eph. 4. 20. Phil. 2. 5. 1 Pet. 2. 21. 1 John 2. 6. *e* Zech. 9. 9. 2 Cor. 10. 1. Phil. 2. 7, 8. Cp. ch. 5. 5. *f* Jer. 6. 16.

gling under heavy burdens, moving with difficulty and pain, as a ship is said to labor, when badly ballasted, in a stormy sea. This labor refers to the service of sin and Satan; under the yoke of a hard master, whose yoke they bear, as oxen bear the yoke in order to serve their master. **And are heavy laden.** *Heavy laden* here means overstrained with too much load to be carried. "No one can mistake the almost violent force of such a figure who has ever noticed how the cruelty of people in Eastern countries leads them to pile on burdens to such an extent that their ill-favored animals can often be seen pitiably staggering under a weight quite unendurable."[1] The burdens are our sins, our bad habits, cares, sorrows, remorse for the past, fears for the future, anxieties, losses, sickness, disappointments, inability to find work, debts, business cares, and all the other things that make life a burden.[2] **And I.** The emphasis is on the *I*. No other can give the needed rest. **Will give you rest.** Not by taking away all burdens, but giving the right burden. There is no real rest without some burden.

30. **For . . . my burden is light.** Christ's burden is one of duty, of self-denial, of labor for him, of the cares that are needful for our best character and development. It is a burden of faith when we cannot see. It is the burden of love and gratitude; and it is infinitely light compared with the other burden. Compare the burden of intemperance, of selfishness, of crime, of fashion, their burden on the conscience, their burden of cost, with all the burdens that Jesus lays upon his disciples. The burden of Christ is like the tail of a kite, which keeps it steady, or like the string by which it rises; like the weight of an engine, without which it could not pull the train; like the burden of wings to a bird, which enable it to fly.[3]

The Rest that is given. There are two kinds of rest promised in this invitation: one is the rest that is given, the other the rest that is found. Here Christ promises to give rest. This rest is (1) that which has its source from without, from trust in the love of God. (2) It is rest from the burden of sin. Forgiveness brings peace. (3) It is the rest of protection. God keeping us under the shadow of his wing. (4) It is rest in the promise that all things should work together for good. (5) It is the rest of new and refreshing strength. The burden is light, is even an exhilaration and joy when strength is given to bear it. (6) It is the rest of love, of the sympathy and friendship of Christ.

29. **Take my yoke upon you.** Emphasis on *my*.

A yoke means three things: (1) It is a mark of obedience and submission. (2) It is the means of service. It enables one to do work. (3) It is service with another. Usually two are yoked together.

And learn of me. Both from my precepts and my example. Become my disciple, go to school to me as your teacher, not for a single lesson, but for all time. Do as I do, learn to be what I am. **For I am meek and lowly in heart.** (1) Humble, compassionate, long-suffering, even toward poor scholars, and hence a blessed teacher of whom to learn. And (2) showing in his heart and life the principles he would teach, and which make his yoke easy. He is *meek*, mild, patient, not easily irritated, of sweet temper. He is lowly, has the true humility that exalts not self, but the truth.

The Rest that is found. **And ye shall find rest unto your souls.** The first rest was given; this rest is wrought into the soul. (1) It is the rest which we *find*, through battle to victory, through labor to success, through prayer to peaceful communion with God, through cares and burdens and sorrows to the perfect peace of perfect trust. (2) It is the rest of free activity, unfettered and unrestrained by an unwilling mind. It is the rest of the activity of a perfectly healthy being who delights to do God's will as freely and gladly as a child plays, or a bird sings, or an artist paints.[4] (3) It is the rest of harmony with Christ and with our destiny and environment. There are no discords to make it hard, no fretting against Providence. Rest is in using the laws amid which we live, and not in resisting them. The ship rests when it moves swiftly according to the laws of the sea and the wind.

"Rest is not quitting the busy career;
Rest is the fitting of self to one's sphere."

[1] C. S. Robinson, D. D.

[2] Compare the burden on Christian's back in *Pilgrim's Progress*.

[3] See Schiller's poem setting forth this thought. Illustrations of this are found in the story of St. Christopher, who bore the Christ Child across the river, and the burden made him cross more easily than when alone; found in *The Schonberg-Cotta Family* and Mrs. Jameson's *Sacred and Legendary Art*. A similar story from classic mythology is beautifully told by Hawthorne in his *Wonder-Book*.

[4] Mrs. Osgood's *Poems*, "Labor is Rest."

30 For [g] my yoke [is] is easy, and my burden is light.

[g] 1 John 5. 3.

(4) It is the rest of love, of delight to follow our leader, of joy to please him and do his will.

30. **For my yoke is easy.** "The word for 'easy' means wholesome or advantageous; not that the yoke is certainly easy to wear always, but that it is the best sort of thing for us; natural and happy, on the whole." [1] Satan's yoke is always galling. The yoke of pride, ambition, selfishness, of fashion, of worldliness, of sin and remorse, of self-indulgence, of sensuality, of covetousness, is always a heavy, bitter, galling yoke, an Egyptian bondage. It is a yoke with Satan, going in his company, doing his will, and receiving his rewards. So the yoke the Pharisees laid on the people by their formalism, traditions and innumerable rules, was a hard yoke to bear. But Christ's yoke is easy. His service is a delight. It is a joy to work with him and for him. All the virtues are joyous and delightful, just in proportion to the degree in which we have them.

CHAPTER 12.

On the Growing Opposition to Christ and his Mission.

Section XII. — Five Separate Attacks; Marking a Distinct Epoch in the Work of Christ.

First Attack: Through Christ's Method of keeping the Sabbath, vers. 1–13.
Second Attack: A Council of the Rulers to destroy Jesus, vers. 14–21.
Third Attack: False Accusations, on Account of the Healing of a Demoniac, vers. 22–37.
Fourth Attack: The Demand for a Sign, vers. 38–45.
Fifth Attack: Interference from his own Family, vers. 46–50.

Time.

At intervals during a year, from the Autumn of A. D. 28 to December, A. D. 29.

Place.

Galilee and Perea.

Note. We have here another example of the way Matthew masses the teachings and events in Christ's life, which took place at different times and in different places, because they belong to one subject or phase of his life. So Matthew gathers together in this chapter matters scattered through nearly a year and a half of the ministry of Jesus, for the purpose of showing the growth of the opposition to him, its occasions and results.

Note. The opposition was one of the natural results of the condition of affairs, the good interfering with the evil.

(1) They resented his reform in cleansing the temple courts from money-changers and dealers in sacrifices, and the dishonest practices which made the temple a den of thieves. This touched their pockets, and reduced their income (John 2: 13–25).

(2) He taught contrary to their ideas of the Sabbath; exposed and denied their false traditions.

(3) His treatment of publicans and sinners scandalized their make-believe purity (Luke 7: 36–50).

(4) His popularity drew away the people from their influence.

(5) His miracles gave him superiority over them.

(6) He was a Galilean, and especially he was from the despised city of Nazareth.

(7) He claimed to be the Messiah, and yet he was not doing what they expected the Messiah would do, and was leaving them out not only from official position, but even from the kingdom itself.

Note three things in each case reported in this chapter: —

(1) The occasions through which the opposition was developed.

(2) Christ's method of dealing with it.

(3) The truths brought into clearer light by the conflict.

[1] C. S. Robinson. D. D.

1 At that (time, season) *h* Jē′sus went on the sabbath day through the (corn; cornfields); and his disciples were an hungred, and *i* began to pluck (the) ears of corn, and to eat.
2 But (when) the Phăr′ĭ-sees, (when they) saw (*it*, they) said unto him, *j* Behold, thy disciples do *k* that which (*it*) is not lawful to do upon the sabbath (day).

h For vers. 1–8, see Mark 2. 23–28 & Luke 6. 1–5. *i* Deut. 23. 25. *j* Cp. ver. 10 & Luke 13. 14 & 14. 3 & John 5. 10 & 7. 23 & 9. 16. *k* Cp. Ex. 20. 9–11.

I. FIRST ATTACK: THROUGH CHRIST'S METHOD OF KEEPING THE SABBATH, vers. 1–13.

TIME. Early Summer of A. D. 28.

PLACE. In the vicinity of Capernaum.

PARALLELS. Mark 2 : 23–28; 3 : 1–5; Luke 6 : 1–11.

SIMILARS. Luke 13 : 10–17; John 5 : 8–11.

1. **At that time**, or period, during some tour or season in Galilee, **Jesus went on the sabbath day through the corn**, or grain. Better, fields of grain, *i. e.*, wheat or barley. The English call all grain, corn. They were doubtless on their way to or from the morning service in the synagogue, for **his disciples were an hungred.** "The rabbinical law allowed no eating on the Sabbath, except in case of sickness, prior to the morning prayers of the synagogue. A similar canon in the ritualistic churches of to-day forbids breaking the fast before partaking of the communion."[1] **And began to pluck the ears of corn.** Luke adds, "rubbing them in their hands," in order to separate the kernel from the chaff. There was no road with fences, but a mere path through the fields of standing grain, so that they did not have to go out of their way.

2. **But when the Pharisees saw it.** These Pharisees were accompanying Jesus, not to learn the truth, but for the one purpose of finding some fault with him. They hated him because they were wrong, and his teaching reproved them; he swept away many of their false rules and customs, and they must either change their lives, or prove the teacher to be in some wrong. Therefore they found every fault possible; they perverted his acts and his words; they measured them by a false standard; they were pitilessly unfair. **Behold, thy disciples.** The narrative carefully avoids saying that Jesus plucked the grain and ate. He simply defended the right of his disciples to do so. Jesus had a perfect right not to pluck the grain, if thereby he could remove any obstacles in the way of the success of his work. He gave the Pharisees no ground for a personal accusation against himself. **That which is not lawful to do upon the sabbath day.** The act was lawful on any other day, being sanctioned both by custom and the Mosaic law (Deut. 23 : 25). But the Fourth Commandment forbade any work on the Sabbath, and the Pharisees had interpreted this law in a most mechanical way, making a great many special prohibitions, the violation of which they insisted was the breaking of the law. They said that reaping and threshing were work, and therefore forbidden, and "it was asserted that plucking corn ears was *a kind of* reaping, and rubbing them *a kind of* threshing." "If a woman were to roll wheat to take away the husks she would be guilty of sifting with a sieve." It is almost impossible for us to conceive what terribly exaggerated views concerning the Sabbath were held by the Jews of that day. In not less than twenty-four chapters of the *Mishnah*, a collection of binding precepts and legal decisions, matters concerning the Sabbath are discussed as if of vital religious importance, which one could scarcely imagine a sane intellect would seriously entertain; as, for instance, it was argued that to walk upon the grass with nailed shoes was a violation of the Sabbath, because it was a kind of threshing, and to catch a flea upon one's person was a violation, because it was a kind of hunting.[2] "It was the boast that Jews were known over the world by their readiness to die rather than break the holy day. Every one had stories of grand fidelity to it. The Jewish sailor had refused, even when threatened with death, to touch the helm a moment after the sun had set on Friday, though a storm was raging; and had not thousands let themselves be butchered rather than touch a weapon in self-defence on the Sabbath? The 'new doctrine' of Jesus would turn the world upside down if not stopped."[3]

"A tragic illustration of Jewish superstition came under my notice, a few years ago, in Jerusalem. A fire broke out, on the Sabbath, in a house in the Jewish quarter. No one would make the slightest effort to extinguish it. It being unlawful among them to kindle a fire on that day, they interpret this prohibition to imply that fire may not be touched; and thus to save themselves from ceremonial pollution, as they supposed, there was not one who would make the slightest effort to rescue the inmates. Three beautiful young

[1] Abbott.

[2] See *The Jerusalem Talmud;* and Edersheim's *Life of Christ*, vol. ii. pp. 783–787, Appendix xvii., where are given an immense number of these ridiculous ways of breaking the Sabbath.

[3] Geikie.

3 But he said unto them, 'Have ye not read what Dā'vid did, when he was an hungred, and they that were with him;

4 How (how) he entered into the house of God, and did eat [m] the shewbread, which it was not lawful for him to eat, neither for them (which, that) were with him, but only for the priests?

5 Or have ye not read [n] in the law, how that on the sabbath (days, day) the priests in the temple profane the sabbath, and are (blameless?, guiltless?)

6 But I say unto you, [o] That in this place is *one* (that one) greater than the temple (is here).

7 But if ye had known [p] what (*this*, this) meaneth, [q] I (will have, desire) mercy, and not sacrifice, ye would not have condemned the guiltless.

l 1 Sam. 21. 1–6. See ch. 21. 16. *m* Ex. 25. 30. Lev. 24. 5–9. *n* Num. 28. 9, 10. Cp. 1 Chr. 9. 32 & John 7. 22, 23. *o* ver. 41, 42. Cp. ver. 8 & Hag. 2. 9 & Mal. 3. 1. *p* ch. 9. 13. *q* Cited from Hos. 6. 6. Cp. Mic. 6. 6–8.

girls were burned to death, when a very little exertion might have saved them all. One of the women, on being afterwards reproached for this hideous tragedy, replied that it was a sacrifice acceptable to God, who would reward them for having allowed their dear ones to perish, rather than break his commandment."[1] It is necessary to have these traditions in mind in order to understand Christ's position on the Sabbath question.

CHRIST DEFENDS HIMSELF BY TWO SCRIPTURAL EXAMPLES. Christ replies to them calmly, without any rough condemnation or sarcasm, by two examples from the Scriptures which they believed to the letter, and whose Sabbath law they thought they were fulfilling; and the examples were of persons whom they revered as peculiarly holy. From these he would deduce the true principles of keeping the law. Their devotion to the Sabbath was right, but their method of applying its law was false in the extreme. A set of hard, definite rules binding the conduct, instead of great principles planted in the heart, always leads to evil, to inconsistency and hypocrisy, and smothers the true life under a load of mere outward forms.

3. **Have ye not read**, so as to remember and apply. The scribes were familiar with the story, but had not seen its meaning. **What David did, when he was an hungred.** He and his men were suffering from want of food. The story is told in 1 Sam. 21: 1–6.

4. **How he entered into the house of God.** The Tabernacle then at Nob, a hill near Jerusalem. **And did eat the shewbread.** The *shewbread* was the *bread* that was kept on the golden table in the Holy Place. It consisted of twelve loaves, corresponding to the number of the tribes of Israel (Ex. 25: 23–30; 39: 36), . . . denoting that Jehovah was the Provider of his people's food. From 1 Sam. 21: 6, it appears that the shewbread was given to David on the day on which it was changed, namely, on the Sabbath (see Lev. 24: 8). The example is thus appropriate as regards the day as well as the act.[2] **Which was not lawful for him to eat . . . but only for the priests.** Lev. 24: 5–9.

THE ARGUMENT was that if David, to keep himself and his followers from suffering hunger, and to enable them to preserve their lives by escaping from Saul, could, without blame, break a ceremonial law in its form, while keeping it in spirit, it must be right so to interpret the Sabbath law as to allow his disciples to do so much work on the Sabbath as was necessary to satisfy their hunger. There is a law that is higher than any outward form. "The Sabbath was made for man," for his good; and if that good required the breaking of the form, it still kept the spirit.

5. **Or have ye not read in the law**, which makes the Sabbath the priests' busiest day of labor, **how that on the sabbath days the priests in the temple profane the sabbath.** By performing the whole temple service. "Not merely does the sacred *history* relate exceptional instances of *necessity*, but the *law* itself ordains labor on the Sabbath day as a duty."[3] **And are blameless**, because the law of the best good of man, his spiritual life and moral character, required that the priests should not keep the form of the commandments. This labor on the part of a few was essential to the true Sabbath-keeping by the many; and, moreover, such labor really fulfilled the spirit of the Sabbath, even to the workers.

THE TRUE PRINCIPLES OF SABBATH-KEEPING. 6. **In this place is one greater than the temple.** Jesus Christ himself. He was greater than the temple, (1) because he was the Lord for whom the temple was reared; (2) all its sacrifices pointed to him, and had their fulfilment in him; (3) he was the Spiritual Temple, the highest temple in which God dwelt.

[1] Canon Tristram in *Sunday-School Times*. [2] Canon Cook. [3] Stier.

8 For [r] the Son of man is Lord even lord of the sabbath. day.
9 And when he was departed thence, he and [s] went into their synagogue:

r Cp. ch. 9. 6. s For ver. 9–14, see Mark 3. 1–6 & Luke 6. 6–11.

7. **If ye had known what this meaneth.** If you had understood the principle which underlies my defence of my disciples' conduct on the Sabbath. **I will have mercy, and not sacrifice.** What helps and blesses men, rather than any forms of worship. All forms of worship are to help men, and any use of them to prevent good coming to man is contrary to their spirit and purpose.

8. **For the Son of man is Lord even of the sabbath.** Therefore he knew its full meaning, and could give the right interpretation of its law. "He was Lord of the Sabbath; not, certainly, to abolish it, — that, surely, were a strange Lordship, especially just after saying that it was made or instituted for man, — but to *own* it, to interpret it, to preside over it, and to ennoble it by merging it in the 'Lord's day' (Rev. 1: 10), breathing into it an air of liberty and love necessarily unknown before."[1] This principle is given in Mark 2: 27, "The sabbath was made for man, and not man for the sabbath."

(1) THE SABBATH IS NOT ABOLISHED. Jesus, the Lord of the Sabbath, did not abolish the Sabbath. He made it for man, and therefore it must endure as long as man lives on earth. The Fourth Commandment is written in the law of God, and in the nature of man. It is not a mere Jewish law, but was made for man. It is the very height of absurdity to suppose that he would abolish a law absolutely necessary to the best welfare of man, and put nothing better in its place; that he would take it from the statute book, while keeping it in the nature of man. "One of the surest marks and measures of the decay of religion in a people is their non-observance of the Lord's day."[2] "Of all divine institutions, the most divine is that which secures a day of rest for man. I hold it to be the most valuable blessing ever conceded to man."[3]

(2) JESUS RESCUED THE SABBATH. What Jesus did was to rescue it from the false interpretations put upon it; from being a mere form to being a spirit and a life. Jesus swept away the cobwebs, he did not tear down the house. He only removed the rubbish with which the Pharisees had encumbered it; and he left it a day of freedom, of joy, of peace. He tore down the scaffolding, that the house itself might be more convenient and beautiful to live in. Jesus would keep the jewel, but wash away the dirt which had accumulated upon it, and dimmed or destroyed its radiance. The Pharisees' interpretations made the law like a palimpsest where the classics and even the Bible were partly erased, and the commonest things written over them; or, like the pictures by great masters in some of the Italian churches, which have been covered with whitewash or stucco. It was such things that Jesus swept away, but left the original, and made it visible to all in its glory and beauty.

(3) THE SUNDAY SABBATH. Sunday is just as really the seventh day and the *Sabbath* day as is the Saturday Sabbath of the Jews. All the difference lies in beginning the count from a different point. Bush well says, "All that the commandment expressly requires is to observe a day of sacred rest after every six days of labor. The seventh day, indeed, is to be kept holy, but not a word is here said as to the point from which the reckoning is to begin." It is every seventh day in rotation after six days of labor.

(4) The only way to increase true Sabbath-keeping is by increasing the spirit of devotion and worship which requires such a day. It is needful to lift up the spirit of man to higher and nobler realms, and to prepare for immortal life. Man needs it as a day for moral training and instruction; a day for teaching men about their duties, for looking at life from a moral standpoint. The Sabbath law of rest is a wall of protection against the inroads of those things which would make these impossible.

(5) The Sabbath rightly used is the greatest institution for learning and culture and soul growth the world has ever known. Hence the neglect of the Sabbath is the surest road to ruin. It is especially important as protecting the interests of those who work for others. It is their jubilee of freedom, the magna charta of liberty.

(6) Jesus gives us the true principle of Sabbath-keeping. It must be for the whole of man, body and soul. It must be helpful to man. Whatever uplifts, comforts, enlarges man, is adapted to the Sabbath. There are times when this law of help is larger than the law of rest, as in the cases Jesus referred to. With such exceptions the rule is that since the Sabbath was made for man, *i. e.*, for *all men*, we must so keep the Sabbath as not to take away its blessing from others.

HOW JESUS KEPT THE SABBATH. (1) *He went to a religious service.* 9. **He went into their synagogue.** Luke says it was on another Sab-

[1] David Brown. [2] *Pastoral Letter of Third Plenary Council at Baltimore.* [3] Lord Beaconsfield.

10 ¶ And, and behold, there was a man which had *his* having a withered hand. withered. And they asked him,
saying, [t] Is it lawful to heal on the sabbath days? day? [u] that they might accuse him.
11 And he said unto them, What man shall there be among of you, that shall have
one sheep, and [v] if it this fall into a pit on the sabbath day, will he not lay hold on
it, and lift it it out?
12 [w] How much then is a man better of more value than a sheep? Wherefore [x] it is law-
ful to do well good on the sabbath days. day.
13 Then saith he to the man, Stretch forth thine thy hand. And he [y] stretched it it
forth; and it was restored whole, like as the other.
14 ¶ Then But the Phăr′ĭ-seeş went out, and [z] held a council took counsel against him, how they
might destroy him.
15 But when And Jē′şus knew perceiving *it*, [a] he withdrew himself from thence: and [b] great multitudes many
followed him; and he healed them all;
16 And and [c] charged them that they should not make him known:
17 [d] That that it might be fulfilled which was spoken by E-sa′ias I-sa′iah the prophet, saying,

t Cp. Luke 14. 3. See ver. 2. *u* Cp. Luke 11. 54 & 20. 20 & John 8. 6. *v* Cp. Ex. 23. 4, 5 & Deut. 22. 4. *w* ch. 6. 26 & 10. 31. *x* Cp. John 5. 16, 17. *y* Cp. 1 Kin. 13. 4. *z* ch. 22. 15 & 27. 1 & 28. 12, *al.* *a* Mark 3. 7. John 10. 39. See ch. 10. 23. *b* ch. 19. 2. *c* Mark 1. 25 (Gk.) & 3. 12 & 8. 30. Luke 4. 41 (Gk.) & 9. 21. See ch. 8. 4. *d* See ch. 1. 22.

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bath. This shows one way in which Jesus was accustomed to keep the Sabbath.

(2) *He helped those in need.* 10. **A man which had his hand withered**, *i. e.*, dried up from a deficient absorption of nutriment. Luke says it was his right hand. This would hinder him in earning a living. **They asked him, saying, Is it lawful to heal on the sabbath?** The question was still being discussed. Here was another opportunity for Jesus to explain his views about Sabbath-keeping. But the object of the Jews was **that they might accuse him**, and thus bring him to trial for Sabbath-breaking, and both discredit his teaching and prevent him from continuing to teach.

11, 12. **One sheep, and if it fall into a pit**, etc. Jesus appealed to their own interpretation of the Sabbath law; and then turned it against themselves by asking, **How much then is a man better** (of more value) **than a sheep? Wherefore**, according to their own rules, **it is lawful to do well**, to do good deeds, **on the sabbath.**

13. **Then saith he to the man.** He did one of the good deeds it was lawful to do. "As the cure is wrought only by a word, the Pharisees have no ground of accusation; there has been no infraction of the letter of even their own regulations."[1] Their whole plan was thus frustrated, while Jesus gave fresh emphasis and new light to his teachings; and he set a good example of wisdom in not unnecessarily awakening prejudice against him.

SECOND ATTACK: BY A COUNCIL OF THE RULERS, vers. 14–21.

TIME. Directly following the previous attack. Early Summer of A. D. 28, near Capernaum.

PARALLELS. Mark 3: 6–12; Luke 6: 11.

14. **The Pharisees**, "filled with madness" (Luke), **went out** from the synagogue where Jesus had healed the withered hand, and discomfited the Pharisees in the Sabbath argument. **And held a council** with the Herodians (Mark), the court party, their natural opponents. They agreed only in their antagonism to Jesus. The Herodians might help them with the government. **How they might destroy him.** They could not argue him down, for they were in the wrong. The only way, it seemed to them, to save their influence with the people, and what they thought was religion, was to put the reformer out of the way.

15. **Jesus . . . withdrew himself**, acting on the counsel he had given to his apostles (10: 23). He went to a level place (Luke), by the seashore (Mark). **And great multitudes followed him.** It was the rulers who opposed. The people needed the words and the deeds of Jesus, for **he healed them all.** This is another of those summaries of miracles which Matthew has given several times before.

16. **Should not make him known**, on account of the plot of the Pharisees, who would interfere with his work.

17. **That it might be fulfilled which was spoken by Esaias**, the Greek form of *Isaiah.*

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[1] Abbott.

18 [e] Behold, my [f] servant, whom I have chosen; [g] my beloved, in whom my soul is well pleased: [h] I will put my spirit upon him, and he shall shew judgment to the Gĕn'tīles.

19 He shall not strive, nor cry; neither aloud; neither shall any man one hear his voice in the streets.

20 A bruised reed shall he not break, and smoking flax shall he not quench, till he send forth judgment unto victory.

21 [i] And in his name shall the Gĕn'tīles trust.

e Cited from Isai. 42. 1–3. *f* Acts 4. 27, 30. *g* ch. 3. 17 (mg.). *h* Cp. Isai. 61. 1 & Luke 4. 18 & John 3. 34 & Acts 10. 38. *i* Isai. 42. 4 (Gk.). Cp. Isai. 11. 10 & Rom. 15. 12.

Saying (Isaiah 42 : 1–4). The prophet's words were spoken first of the return of the Jews from exile, and the restoration of the kingdom and the Temple. But the larger fulfilment, of which the Return was a type and example, was the return from spiritual exile, and the restoration of the true kingdom of God through Jesus Christ.

18. **Behold my servant** (my son, of Ps. 2 : 7), "the personal instrument of Israel's redemption." [1] **Whom I have chosen.** The elect people of Israel, who led the Return, a type of Christ, the Messiah, the *chosen* one, the **beloved.** "The conception of the Servant of Jehovah is, as it were, a pyramid, of which the base is the people of Israel as a whole, the second part, Israel 'according to the Spirit,' and the summit the person of the Mediator of Salvation who arises out of Israel." [2] **I will put my spirit upon him,** so that he is the representative of God, and expresses his character and desires for men. **He shall shew judgment.** Justice, righteousness, "the true religion regarded from its practical side." [2] **To the Gentiles.** The nations, who were idolaters.

19. **He shall not strive, nor cry.** He shall not conquer the nations by armies, and battles, and shouts of the warrior, but "his methods shall be purely inward and spiritual;" [1] by the "still small voice" of the Spirit; by the power of reason, and conscience, and persuasion, and truth.

Neither shall any man hear his voice in the streets. This cannot mean that he will not preach the Gospel, for the prophet's "constant keynotes are 'speak,' 'lift up the voice with strength,' 'sing,' 'publish,' 'declare.' In fact there is no use to which the human voice has ever been put in the service of man, for comfort's sake, or for justice, or for liberty for the diffusion of knowledge, or for the scattering of music, which our prophet does not enlist and urge upon his people." [1] [3] The word for "cry" is not the call of a herald, but "to scream." The Servant of Jehovah will not brawl in the streets, or scream, or gain his ends by noisy violence or contention; just as Jesus and his apostles went elsewhere when mobbed or persecuted. All this was in vivid contrast with the turbulent violence of those who were trying to overthrow the Roman government and be the false messiahs of force and revolution.

20. **A bruised reed shall he not break.** [4] He shall respect the feeblest desires for better things. **And smoking flax,** Heb., "a dimly burning wick," **shall he not quench,** extinguish. "The virtues expiring among the nations, but not dead;" [3] the poorest, the weakest, the sorely crushed he cares for with his gentle hand. "To the poor the Gospel is preached." He encourages "the slightest spark of repentant feeling," the weakest longing to return to God. Compare the father in the Prodigal Son; and the case of Zaccheus; and Jesus' treatment of the publicans and sinners. The name of God as our Father, revealed clearly by Jesus, expresses the same loving care.

Till he send forth judgment. The principles of truth and righteousness, the principles of the kingdom of heaven. **Unto victory.** Till they shall succeed in redeeming the individual, making the feeble spark to become a flame of divine love that cannot be extinguished; and bringing the whole world under their sway. Christ's plan and method were the only ones that could possibly make righteousness to triumph, and cause God's kingdom to come, and his will to be done "on earth as it is in heaven."

21. **And in his name shall the Gentiles**

[1] Prof. Cheyne on *Isaiah.*

[2] Prof. Delitzsch on *Isaiah.*

[3] Prof. George Adam Smith on *Isaiah.*

[4] "Compare the beautiful passage in Dante, where Cato directs Virgil to wash away the stains of the nether world from Dante's face, and to prepare him for the ascent of the Purgatorial mount by girding him with a rush, the emblem of humility" (*Purgatorio*, i. 94–105, 133–137). — Prof. M. R. Vincent, in *Word Studies.*

22 ¶ [j] Then was brought unto him one possessed with a devil, blind and dumb: and he healed him, insomuch that the blind and dumb both man spake and saw.
23 [k] And all the people multitudes were amazed, and said, [k] Is not this the son of Dā'vid?
24 But when the Phăr'ĭ-sees heard it, they said, This fellow man doth not cast out devils, [l] but by Bĕ-ĕl'zę-bŭb the prince of the devils.
25 And Je'sus [m] knew knowing their thoughts, [n] and he said unto them, Every kingdom divided against itself is brought to desolation; and every city or house divided against itself shall not stand:
26 And and if Sā'tan cast casteth out Sā'tan, he is divided against himself; how then shall then his kingdom stand?

j For vers. 22–24, see Luke 11. 14, 15. Cp. ch. 9. 32–34. *k* John 4. 29 & 7. 26, 31. See ch. 9. 27. *l* Mark 3. 22. See ch. 10. 25. *m* See ch. 9. 4. *n* For vers. 25–29, see Mark 3. 23–27 & Luke 11. 17–22.

trust. The Messiah's work would extend to all nations. His gentle, patient, hopeful, spiritual methods were the only ones which could reach them. He cherished whatever was good in them, however feeble and dim might be the spark of divine life within them.

THIRD ATTACK: FALSE ACCUSATIONS ON ACCOUNT OF THE HEALING OF A DEMONIAC, vers. 22–37.

TIME. Autumn, A. D. 28 or 29.

PLACE. Capernaum.

PARALLELS. Mark 3: 22–30; Luke 11: 14–23.

22. **Then.** Not referring to time, but to sequence of attacks. After he had defended himself from one attack, *then* came another from a different point. **One possessed with a devil, blind, and dumb.** An unusually difficult case. Concerning demoniacs see on 8: 28–34. **And he healed him.** There were practically three miracles in one. "When Satan is dethroned, the spiritual faculties begin to work at once." [1]

23. **And all the people were amazed** (ἐξίσταντο), "removed out of their senses," astonished beyond measure; so that the word "amazed" signifies astonished with perplexity. They were in a maze, they could not understand it. They questioned, **Is not this the son of David** (omit "not"), is not this the promised Messiah?

24. **But when the Pharisees heard it.** They had come down from Jerusalem (Mark) to see what they could do to stop this Galilean reformer. **They said.** In contrast with what the people had said, **this fellow is possessed by Beelzebub** (Mark) **and doth not cast out devils, but by Beelzebub the prince of the devils.** See on 9: 34. They could not deny the fact, and therefore sought to explain it away. The prince of demons could cast out his demon subjects in order to deceive men, so that people might believe his pestiferous teaching as if it were from God. The Pharisees endeavored to put Satan's labels on God's good works. Sometimes new and progressive truths have been labelled "error," and sometimes saints have been labelled "heretics," and "back numbers." Evil has been labelled "good," and deadly heresies have been labelled "progressive thought." The use of false catch phrases has been a favorite device for leading astray the unsuspecting.

25. **And Jesus knew their thoughts,** and called them unto him (Mark) **and said unto them,** by comparisons, illustrations, analogies (Mark). **Every kingdom divided against itself is brought to desolation.** The kingdom of heaven, with all its virtues and blessings for man, with Christ at its head, was arrayed against the kingdom of evil, with Satan at its head. Everything Christ did was destructive of what Beelzebub did. The prince of demons might order some demon out of a man for the sake of deceiving some one, but he could not systematically oppose his own principles, and try to make men healthy, and holy, and happy. "A nation or kingdom may embrace within itself infinite parties, divisions, discords, jealousies, and heart-burnings; yet, if it is to subsist as a nation at all, it must not, *as regards other nations*, have lost its sense of unity. When it does so, of necessity it falls to pieces and perishes." [2] **Every city or house divided against itself.** That is, the household of some large landholder or prince, or a business house. If some individual in the castle betrays their plans to an enemy, or if some are seeking to destroy the work which others are trying to do, there can be no prosperity.

26. **If Satan cast out Satan,** etc. Therefore, it is absurd to suppose that I, who am in every way seeking to destroy his kingdom, can be in league with him. Moreover, if Jesus were in league with Satan and yet working against him,

[1] Spurgeon.

[2] Arbp. Trench.

27 And if I by Bĕ-ĕl′zę-bŭb cast out devils, [o] by whom do your [p] children sons cast them out? therefore shall they shall be your judges.

28 But if I by the Spirit of God cast out devils, [q] by the Spirit of God, then is [r] the kingdom of God is come unto you.

29 Or else [s] how can one enter into a strong man's house, the house of the strong *man*, and spoil his goods, except he first bind the strong man? *man*? and then he will [t] spoil his house.

30 [u] He that is not with me is against me; and he that gathereth not with me scattereth abroad.

31 [v] ¶ Wherefore Therefore I say unto you, All manner of Every sin and blasphemy shall be forgiven unto men: but the [w] blasphemy *against* against the *Holy* Holy Ghost Spirit shall not be forgiven unto men.

32 And whosoever speaketh shall speak a word [x] against the Son of man, [y] it shall be forgiven him: but [w] whosoever speaketh shall speak against the Hō′lў Ghost, Spirit, it shall not be forgiven him, neither in [z] this world, neither nor in the *world* that which is to come.

o Cp. Acts 19. 13. *p* Cp. 2 Kin. 2. 7. *q* Cp. ver. 18. *r* ch. 19. 24 & 21. 31, 43. Luke 17. 21. Cp. ch. 3. 2 & Mark 1. 15, *al.* *s* Isai. 49. 24. *t* Cp. Isai. 53. 12. *u* Luke 11. 23. Cp. Mark 9. 40 & Luke 9. 50. *v* For ver. 31, 32, see Mark 3. 28–30. Cp. Luke 12. 10 & Heb. 6. 4–6 & 10. 26 & 1 John 5. 16. *w* Cp. Acts 7. 51 & Heb. 10. 29. *x* ch. 11. 19. John 7. 12 & 9. 24. *y* 1 Tim. 1. 12, 13. *z* Cp. Eph. 1. 21.

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it would be wise for the Pharisees to let him alone, for he would soon destroy himself.

27. **If I by Beelzebub cast out devils,** demons. If what you charge against me is true, it must hold against your own disciples. **Sons,** refers to their disciples, trained up by them ; like the phrase "sons of the prophets." They were the Jewish exorcists (Mark 9 : 38 ; Acts 19 : 13), who professed to cast out evil spirits. Whether they really did do it, or only seemed to, the argument is the same. They had some kind of results of their incantations. **They shall be your judges.** They convict you of slander and injustice since you charge me with collusion with Satan, but do not charge them, though they pretend to do the same thing.

29. **How can one enter a strong man's house.** A general truth, but here applied to Satan's stronghold, wherever he has possession, as the soul of a man held in possession by Satan or his demons. **And spoil his goods.** Jesus was defeating Satan by casting out the demons Satan had sent, by cleansing the soul from the sins, the evil passions, which Satan plants and fosters there. **Except he first bind the strong man.** By every act which shows that he is stronger. Christ's teachings and his works showed that he had gained a victory over Satan and was stronger than he.

30. **He that is not with me is against me.** This is a general principle, applied to the rulers and the people. I stand for the kingdom of God. If you oppose me and my teachings you show that you do not belong to that kingdom, but the kingdom of evil. You must be in one or the other. **He that gathereth not** the people into the fold of God, **with me, scattereth abroad,** the sheep into the deserts and wilds.

31. **Wherefore I say unto you.** Because by your opposition to me, and your unjust charges, you are perilously near to blasphemy, and the unpardonable sin. **All manner of sin and blasphemy,** slanderous, injurious, insulting speaking against others, **shall be forgiven,** are forgivable, can be forgiven to those who repent. **But the blasphemy against the Holy Ghost,** Holy Spirit, **shall not be forgiven.** Blasphemy against God was equivalent to treason in our times, treason against the kingdom of heaven and its king. It was punishable by death according to Jewish law ; and was the crime of which Jesus was accused by the Sanhedrim, and condemned to death.

32. **A word against the Son of man** was forgivable, for men might not recognize him as the representative of God, and thus might speak evil of him, and yet not intend to blaspheme God, or set themselves against God.

But whosoever speaketh against the Holy Ghost, it shall not be forgiven him. Because it is a deliberate and conscious rejection of good, and choice of evil. This sin cannot be forgiven, not because God is unwilling to forgive, or has no feelings of mercy toward such a sinner, but because one who thus sins against the Holy Spirit has put himself where no power can soften his heart or change his nature. A man may misuse his eyes and yet see ; but whosoever puts them out can never see again. One may misdirect his mariner's compass, and turn it aside from the north pole by a magnet or piece of iron, and it may recover and point right again ; but whosoever destroys the compass itself has lost his guide at sea. So it is possible for us to sin and be forgiven : recovery through God's Spirit is not impossible. But if we so harden our hearts that

33 [a] Either make the tree good, and [his/its] fruit good; or [else] make the tree corrupt, and [his/its] fruit corrupt: [b] for the tree is known by [his/its] fruit.

34 [c] [O generation/Ye offspring] of vipers, how can ye, [d] being evil, speak good things? [e] for out of the abundance of the heart the mouth speaketh.

35 [e] [A/The] good man out of [the/his] good treasure [of the heart] bringeth forth good things: and [an/the] evil man out of [the/his] evil treasure bringeth forth evil things.

36 [But/And] I say unto you, [That/that] [f] every idle word that men shall speak, [g] they shall give account thereof [h] in the day of [judgment./judgement.]

37 For [i] by thy words thou shalt be justified, and by thy words thou shalt be condemned.

a ch. 7. 16–20. *b* Luke 6. 43, 44. *c* ch. 3. 7 & 23. 33. *d* ch. 7. 11. *e* ch. 15. 18, 19. Luke 6. 45. Cp. ch. 13. 52 & Eph. 4. 29. *f* Cp. Eph. 5. 4, 11 & 2 Pet. 1. 8. *g* Eccles. 12. 14. Rom. 14. 12. 1 Pet. 4. 5. *h* See Acts 17. 31. *i* Cp. ch. 5. 22 & James 3. 2–12.

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they cannot feel the power of the Spirit, if we are past feeling, then there is no hope.

Neither in this world, not κόσμος, the physical world, but τῷ αἰῶνι, this age, period. Neither in this world-period. **Neither in the world to come**, the coming world-period, or age. The truth is the same whether this refers to the Jewish and the Christian dispensations, or to the first and the second coming of Christ; or to the present and the future life.

The Unpardonable Sin. In former times, more than in our day, many with tender consciences were greatly troubled lest they had committed the unpardonable sin. But (1) whoever feels sorry for his sin cannot have committed the unpardonable sin, because God has repeatedly promised forgiveness to all such. (2) Jesus, in this very passage, says that every kind of sin can receive forgiveness except this one, which is a hardening of the heart against every possible influence that can change it. He does not say that *sin* against the Holy Spirit, but only *blasphemy*, is unpardonable. (3) God's invitations show that all who desire forgiveness, all who have any feeling of tenderness, all who are weary of sin, can have abundant forgiveness.

33. But why should mere words, however bitter, be subject to such severe punishment? Because **the tree is known by his fruit.** The words reveal character, and the character produces fruit after its kind. (See on 7 : 16–18.) You should be honest in your judgment. Here are my good works; they must proceed from good principles. They could not come from one in league with Satan.

34. **O generation of vipers.** (See on 3 : 7.) Offspring of vipers, having the deadly nature of vipers. **How can ye, being evil, speak good things.** Your slanders against me, your plots, your angry words and false charges, show your real nature. **For out of the abundance of the heart the mouth speaketh.** The mouth is the easiest outlet of the feelings and character within. "It does not mean that the definite subjects which most engage a man's interest will be necessarily most talked about by him." Nor does it mean that a bad man may not sometimes speak most excellent words, for a time and for a purpose. But to those that will observe carefully, and note all his speech under differing circumstances, the words will infallibly indicate in some way what is in the heart.

35. **A good man out of the good treasure of the heart.** Only that which is in the heart can come forth from it. You can dig out of the mine only what is in the mine, — from the gold mine, gold; from the coal mine, coal. From a poisoned fountain only deadly waters can flow. In the Parliament of Religions the theories of religion were presented, but the real test of their value would have been in bringing together the people made by the religion, the practical results. When some one said to Wendell Phillips that Hinduism was as good as Christianity, he replied, "India is the answer."

36. **That every idle word that men shall speak.** Idle, ἀργὸν, from ἀ, *not*, and ἔργον, *work*. That which does not work, is useless, accomplishes no purpose. Careless words, thoughtless words, innuendoes, slurs, sneers, spoken idly, often do an immense amount of mischief.

> "Evil is wrought by want of thought
> As well as want of heart."

The expression does not refer to pleasantries, and clean, harmless joking, free from irreverence, malice, or possible injury to others; for these are not idle, but answer a good purpose. The statement is that everything that proceeds out of the heart, even the smallest word, expresses the character within, and therefore we **shall give account thereof in the day of judgment.**

37. **For by thy words**, as the fruits of the heart, as flowing from the character,[1] **thou shalt**

[1] Conan Doyle's *Adventures of Sherlock Holmes* gives a great many instances.

38 ¶ Then certain of the scribes and of the Phăr'i-sees answered unto him, saying,
Master, [j] we would see a sign from thee.

39 But he answered and said unto them, [k] An evil and [l] adulterous generation
seeketh after a sign; and there shall no sign be given to it but the sign of
the prophet Jo'nas:
Jo'nah the prophet:

40 For [m] as Jo'nas was three days and three nights in the whale's belly; belly of the whale; [n] so shall
the Son of man be three days and three nights in the heart of the earth.

j ch. 16. 1. Mark 8. 11, 12. Luke 11. 16 & 23. 8. John 2. 18 & 4. 48 & 6. 30. 1 Cor. 1. 22. *k* ch. 16. 4. For vers. 39–42, see Luke 11. 29–32. Cp. Mark 8. 11, 12. *l* Isai. 57. 3. Mark 8. 38. James 4. 4. *m* Jonah 1. 17. *n* Cp. ch. 17. 22, 23.

be justified, shown to be just, righteous; or **condemned**, because shown to be bad at heart.

FOURTH ATTACK: THE DEMAND FOR A SIGN, vers. 38–45.

Immediately following the last attack.

38. **Certain of the scribes and . . . Pharisees answered.** Answered the necessary inference from what he had said, that he was from heaven, and represented God and the good, and that they were opposed to these. **Master**, teacher, **we would**, we wish to, **see a sign from thee**, a sign from heaven (Luke 11: 16). "Sign" was one of the terms used for miracle, a divine act which signified that the worker was from God; a testimony from heaven that Jesus was really what he claimed to be. Jesus had given abundant signs. There was not a lack of signs, but of eyes to see them. Still they wanted one of their own choosing, like the manna by Moses, the sun and moon standing still by Joshua, or fire from heaven by Elijah. "Their language was respectful, but their design bad (Luke 11: 16)."

39. **An evil and adulterous generation.** Frequently God's people are represented as a bride, a wife, wedded to him in the most intimate and beautiful relations. Forsaking God, — seeking after idols, turning from the true religious and righteous life, — for worldly advantages and pleasures, is like unfaithfulness to the marriage vow. That generation had forsaken God, their hearts were made dull and hard by sin. When such a generation **seeketh after a sign . . . there shall no sign be given to it**; for it would do no good. They would not see it as a sign; they would misinterpret it, and misuse it. For such a sign would not be in accordance with the principles of the true Messiah, would not be his sign, but only that of a worldly Messiah, an outward King and Conqueror such as they expected. There is no use in singing angels' songs to the deaf, or painting pictures for the blind, or for those who are looking through distorting glasses. **But the sign of the prophet Jonas**, Jonah. In two ways Jonah was to be a sign to them.

The First Sign. 40. **For as Jonas was three days and three nights in the whale's belly**, in the heart of the sea. The Greek here translated "whale," τοῦ κήτους, is a general term for *sea monster*, as is the Hebrew in the story of Jonah.

So shall the Son of man be three days and three nights in the heart of the earth, in the grave. According to the common view that Christ was crucified on Friday, he was in the grave only from Friday night till Sunday morning, parts of three days and three nights. But with the Orientals these counted as three days and three nights.

"When the Oriental speaks of a day he says 'a day and a night;' that is his phrase for 'a day.' A part of a day counts for 'a day' or for 'a day and a night,' whether it includes any of the night or not. Thus, an hour before a new day and an hour after a new day, together with the intervening day, counts as three days and three nights, because it includes parts of three days or of three of those days which are called 'a day and a night.'"[1]

"This ancient usage as to time-reckoning still prevails in Palestine. Dr. Robinson, the distinguished author of *Biblical Researches*, on going to the Holy Land found that 'five days' of quarantine really meant 'only three whole days and a small portion of two others.'" The same method of counting is used as to years in reckoning the length of the reigns of kings. If any one hesitates about accepting this undoubted fact in its application to the three days that Jesus was in the grave, he can agree with those who believe that Jesus was crucified on Thursday instead of Friday. Another view of "the heart of the earth" is presented in the *Expositor* for July, 1897. It means "in the depths of distress," of misery, gloom, depression, as in Ps. 71 : 20, and 88: 6; and hence includes the time, three full days and nights, from Thursday evening, through Gethsemane and the Crucifixion, till Sunday morning. How was this a sign? Jonah's experience of three days in the depths and his deliverance

[1] H. C. Trumbull.

41 *o* "The men of Nin'e-veh shall rise (stand up) in the judgment (the judgement) with this generation, and *p* shall condemn it: because (for) *q* they repented at the preaching of Jo'nas (Jo'nah); and *r* behold, a greater than Jo'nas (Jo'nah) is here.

42 *s* "The queen of the south shall rise up in the judgment (judgement) with this generation, and shall condemn it: for she came from the uttermost parts (ends) of the earth to hear the wisdom of Sŏl'o-mon; and *r* behold, a greater than Sŏl'o-mon (is) is here.

43 When (But) *t* the unclean spirit, when he is gone out of a (the) man, he walketh (passeth) through *u* dry (waterless) places, seeking rest, and findeth none (it not).

44 Then he saith, I will return into my house from whence I came out; and when he is come, he findeth *it* (it) empty, swept, and garnished.

45 Then goeth he, and taketh with himself seven other spirits more wicked (evil) than himself, and they enter in and dwell there: and *t* the last state of that man is (becometh) worse than the first. Even so shall it be also unto this *w* wicked (evil) generation.

o Jonah 1. 2. *p* Heb. 11. 7. Cp. Jer. 3. 11 & Ezek. 16. 51, 52 & Wisd. 4. 16 & Rom. 2. 27. *q* Jonah 3. 5. *r* ver. 6. *s* 1 Kin. 10. 1. 2 Chr. 9. 1. *t* For vers. 43–45 see Luke 11. 24–26. *u* Cp. Ps. 63. 1 & Jer. 2. 6. *v* 2 Pet. 2. 20–22. Cp. Ecclus. 34. 26 & John 5. 14. *w* ver. 39.

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was a type of Christ's experience of three days in the grave, and his deliverance by his resurrection. And as Jonah's experience proved to those whom he urged to repentance that God had sent him, so Christ's experience would in the future prove that he was the Messiah sent from God, to urge all men to repentance. The sign was not given them, but it would be in due time.

THE SECOND SIGN was that as Jonah preached to the Ninevites, Yet forty days and Nineveh shall be overthrown, unless they repented being always implied; so Jesus proclaimed, Repent, or Jerusalem shall be overthrown; repent each one of you, or you must perish. Their repentance was a sign to this generation.

41. **The men of Nineveh shall rise**, stand up or come forward as witnesses in the judgment. Both when the judgment of God came on Jerusalem, and in the final judgment day. **And shall condemn it**, by their example of repentance. **And, behold, a greater than Jonas is here.** Therefore your crime is greater in your refusing to repent since you have greater reasons and motives for repentance. They might have been saved as Nineveh was, but they refused.

42. **The queen of the south**, the queen of Sheba, supposed to be Sabæa in the south of Arabia. **Shall condemn it**, by her noble conduct, proving what was possible to this generation, who in spite of her example refused to learn wisdom of a wiser than Solomon, and to seek for wonderful spiritual riches, "of which the half cannot be told," beyond all that attracted the queen to Solomon's court.

43. Jesus again warns the Pharisees, by an illustration, of the great and insidious danger that threatens them on account of their sins. **When the unclean spirit is gone out of a man**, any supposed individual. **He walketh through dry places**, deserts, where there is nothing attractive, and he is restless because he finds no congenial home. This explains why he wishes to go back to his familiar haunt in the man. The sinful heart is the natural home of the evil spirit.

44. **He findeth it empty, swept, and garnished.** Nothing new, no great interest, no fulness of the Holy Spirit had taken his place. Here was the fatal mistake of the man. The emptiness of the house was an invitation to the evil spirit to return.

45. **Seven other spirits.** Even bad spirits want company; sins grow in clusters. Evils are allied one to another. **And dwell there.** They knew they could remain in a heart that being once cleansed did not put good in the place of the evil.

APPLICATIONS. "The popular superstition which credits every deserted house with being haunted, and peoples it with bad spirits, has a germ of truth." "'We must empty by filling,' said a divinely enlightened woman, Ellice Hopkins; and a wise man has said, 'Nothing is ever displaced until it is replaced.' In these two utterances lies the secret (if it be a secret) of all reform. Here, as elsewhere, nature (which abhors a vacuum) teaches. We cannot pump the darkness out of a room: we must empty it by filling it with light. One tallow-dip will do more to exclude darkness than a thousand steam-pumps. The only way to shut out disease is to fill the veins with health. In morals we must banish the degrading by the elevating — not by prohibition but by substitution. We must crowd out the saloon by the reading-room, the lecture, the boys' guild, and the young

46 ¶ While he was yet talking to the people, behold, his *x* mother and his *y* brethren stood without, desiring to speak with him.

47 Then one said unto him, Behold, thy mother and thy brethren stand without, desiring to speak with thee.

48 But he answered and said unto him that told him, Who is my mother? and who are my brethren?

x For vers. 46–50, see Mark 3. 31–35 & Luke 8. 19–21. *y* ch. 13. 55. Mark 6. 3. John 2. 12 & 7. 3, 5, 10. Acts 1, 14. 1 Cor. 9. 5. Gal. 1. 19.

men's club, with its light and pleasant rooms, its games, and its cheerful welcome." [1]

So shall it be also unto this wicked generation. They had cast out idolatry, and the neglect of God's worship and of God's Word. The nation had "become empty, swept, and garnished, — swept and garnished by the decencies of civilization and discoveries of secular knowledge, but empty of living and earnest faith." [2] They had not filled the nation with piety, with good works, with labors for the salvation of men. The place of the old had not been filled. Then entered impurity and selfishness, ambition, hypocrisy, adultery, false swearing, narrowness, hate of what was good, love of money, and love of praise. The end was that the nation and the temple were destroyed, and destroyed by these very evils, as the story of the destruction of Jerusalem forty years later shows. If they had only taken Christ and the Holy Spirit into their emptied house, they would have remained unto this day.

The same principle holds of every reform, whether of the individual or the nation. Unless the converted or reformed man or the church is filled with the Holy Spirit and the fruits of the Spirit, with faith and love and absorbing interest in God's kingdom, in labors for others, in devotion to missions and all good things, living and earnest, — that soul or that church will grow worse instead of better.

THE FIFTH FORM OF OPPOSITION: FROM HIS OWN FAMILY, vers. 46–50.

TIME. Autumn, A. D. 28.

PLACE. Capernaum.

PARALLELS. Mark 3 : 31–35; Luke 8 : 19–21.

46. **While he yet talked to the people.** In the house where he had just been discoursing, and apparently interrupting his discourse. **His mother** Mary, no doubt with the very best of intentions and deepest love. **His brethren.** Their names, James, Joses, Simon, Judas, are given in Matt. 13 : 55 and Mark 6 : 3. "Some understand them to have been his literal 'brethren,' others think they were the sons of Cleophas and Mary, the sister and namesake of the Virgin." [3] In the latter case, they were cousins of Jesus, and probably adopted into the family. Commentators are about equally and earnestly divided between the two opinions. Joseph was not mentioned, and was probably dead. At this time his brethren did not believe on him (John 7 : 5). **Stood without.** Having arrived at Capernaum after a journey of some hours from Nazareth on purpose to lay hold of him (Mark 3 : 21), they stood without the house, or on the outskirts of the circle of his hearers, **desiring to speak with him.**

47. They sent a message to him, probably passing the word from one person to another, till some **one said unto him** that his mother and brothers were waiting to speak to him.

THE REASON seems to have been that he appeared to them to be out of his mind (Mark 3 : 21). "It was only an honest fear that he was going crazy, and needed to be taken care of," as Festus thought Paul was out of his mind. For (1) he was making the religious leaders his enemies; (2) he was preaching strange, almost revolutionary doctrines; (3) the great crowds and the consequent excitement might render him fanatical; (4) he was not taking the place which they supposed the Messiah would take. Such a Messiah as he was seemed almost absurd to them; (5) without doubt many false or exaggerated stories were told concerning him, put in circulation by the Pharisees and his enemies. (6) They probably thought he was in danger of his life.

OPPOSITION FROM FRIENDS is very common in the career of reformers and of those who depart from the ordinary course. History is full of instances. It is very frequent, too, in the case of those who, in irreligious families or societies, seek to become Christians. (See Matt. 10 : 24, 35–37.) Here is a severe test. But the only way in which this world can be improved and saved is by that faith, and character, and truth which will do right no matter who opposes. They who when "at Rome do as the Romans do" in matters of conscience will never change Rome into the city of God.

48. **He answered . . . Who is my mother? and who are my brethren?** There is nothing contemptuous in this reply, nor any hint that Jesus ignored earthly relationships. We know

[1] Wayland Hoyt, D. D. [2] Alford. [3] *Cambridge Bible.*

49 And he stretched forth his hand toward[towards] his disciples, and said, Behold, my mother and my brethren!

50 For [z] whosoever shall [a] do the will of my Father which is in heaven, the same[he] is my brother, and sister, and mother.

z Cp. John 15. 14 & Heb. 2. 11. a ch. 7. 21. Cp. Luke 11. 28.

that he loved his mother by his care for her when dying on the cross. But the answer was twofold. *First*, he taught them that his earthly relations had no control over his divine work. It was impossible for them then to understand him, or to judge correctly as to his duty. *Second*, he used these earthly relationships as an illustration and an invitation.

49. **And**, looking round about (Mark), **he stretched forth his hand toward his disciples.** Not merely the twelve, but those who followed him, and were learning his will. A disciple is a learner, one who goes to school to another, who accepts of his teaching.

Behold these are **my mother and my brethren! For whosoever shall do the will of my Father.** And be thus like their Father in heaven having his Spirit, his aims, his character. **The same is my brother**, etc., because born of the same Father (John 3: 3, 5); because like Jesus in nature; because a more than brotherly affection arises between them. How much is involved in this relationship with Jesus! By it we become children and heirs of God, joint heirs with Christ. We can inherit from our good parents three things: (1) A nature, tendencies toward good, possibilities of great usefulness and happiness. (2) We may inherit possessions, wealth, rank, home. (3) We inherit the love and care and training of a good home. All these in an infinite degree we inherit from our Father if we are the brothers and sisters of Christ; a pure and holy nature, capable of infinite blessedness; all the wealth of heaven as our home, so perfect, so beautiful, so rich in every good; and the personal care and love of God himself. **And mother.** Expressing the tenderest, purest, and deepest love on earth, the very ideal and type of love. With such affection are the disciples of Jesus bound together with him, — an affection which can be expressed only by the dearest and holiest ties.

CHAPTER 13.

A Chapter of Parables.

Section XIII. — A NEW METHOD OF TEACHING; BY PARABLES.

Seven Parables illustrating Various Aspects of the Kingdom of Heaven.

1. The Sowers.
2. The Tares.
3. The Mustard Seed.
4. The Leaven.
5. The Hid Treasure.
6. The Pearl of Great Price.
7. The Draw-Net.

Time.

Autumn, A. D. 28. The same day as ch. 12: 22–50.

Place.

Beside the Sea of Galilee.

Place in Life of Christ.

The last quarter of the second year. The middle of the Galilean ministry.

We now begin a new epoch in the teaching of Christ, growing out of the bitter opposition to his work, the perverse misunderstanding of his teaching, and the dulness of response to the truths he taught. The opposition, as usual, brings out new truths and new methods which have been a power all through the ages, just as the small black film in the electric bulb, by obstructing the flow of electricity, produces the brilliant light.

The Group of Eight Parables. We have here another instance of Matthew's favorite method of grouping together things of a kind. It may have been the Master's also, for it is probable that these eight parables (seven in Matthew, and one other in Mark) were all spoken at one time, concerning the kingdom of heaven in various aspects, and they should be read and studied as a group, in order to obtain a view of the drift and burden of Jesus' teaching at this time.

1 THE same / ON that day went Jē'ṣus out of the house, [b] and sat by the sea side.
2 And great multitudes / there were gathered together / unto him' great multitudes, [c] so that he went / entered into a ship, / boat, and sat; and all the whole multitude stood on the shore. / beach.
3 And [d] he spake many things unto / to them many things in parables, saying, Behold, [e] a / the sower went forth to sow;

b For vers. 1–15, see Mark 4. 1–12. Luke 8. 4–10. *c* Cp. Mark 3. 9. Luke 5. 1–3. *d* ver. 34. *e* Cp. Isai. 55. 10. Amos 9. 13.

These parables are followed by a group of miracles, as was the Sermon on the Mount in the record given by Matthew, as if on purpose to confirm the teacher's authority for the great truths he spoke. These miracles, according to the arrangement of Andrews, Stevens and Burton, and others, were: the Stilling of the Tempest, the Gadarene Demoniac, Jairus' Daughter, the Woman with the issue of blood, Two Blind Men, and the Dumb Demoniac.

A BUSY DAY IN THE LIFE OF JESUS, vers. 1–3.

THE PREACHER. 1. **The same day**, in which the events of the last chapter, vers. 22–50, took place, — the miracle, the opposition, the discourses, the interference of his family. These were followed by the parables of this chapter. **Went Jesus out of the house**, where he had been discoursing, **and sat by the sea side.** How Jesus loved the country and the sea!

> "O Galilee, sweet Galilee,
> Where Jesus loved so much to be;
> O Galilee, blue Galilee,
> Come sing thy song again to me."[1]

THE AUDIENCES. 2. **Great multitudes were gathered together unto him.** From every city (Luke), including every variety of character represented in the parables spoken. Most of them had heard him and seen his miracles, or heard of him. Great expectations were aroused concerning the Messiah and his kingdom that was at hand, and these needed both encouragement and correction. **So that he went into a ship.** A fishing boat. Here he sat as in a pulpit, while the multitudes stood upon the circular shores of the bay, which rise up as they recede from the water, thus forming a great amphitheatre crowded with people, of which Jesus in the fishing-boat was the centre.

THE PULPIT. Macgregor, in his "Rob Roy," once approached this place, and spoke to those on the shore. "It was remarkable," he says, "how distinctly every word was heard, though our voices were not raised, even at three hundred yards off; and it was very easy to comprehend how, in this clear air, a preacher sitting in a boat could address a vast multitude standing upon the shore."

THE TEXT. His text was close at hand. The hillsides in full view "were green with vineyard terraces," olive orchards, fig and almond trees on every slope. "The first winter rains cause the earth to break forth into a wealth of flowers, which continue to increase, until in spring this beauteous coat of many colors completely covers the surface. Their variety of form and color also baffles description." "A French botanist told me that he had found no land which could compare with Syria for its flowers."[2]

"There was the undulating corn-field descending to the water's edge. There was the trodden pathway running through the midst of it, with no fence or hedge to prevent the seed from falling here and there on either side of it, or upon it; itself hard with constant tramp of horse, mule, and human feet. There was the 'good' rich soil, which distinguishes the whole of that plain and its neighborhood from the bare hills, elsewhere descending into the lake, and which, where there is no interruption, produces one vast mass of corn. There was the rocky ground of the hillside protruding here and there through the corn-fields, as elsewhere through the grassy slopes. There were the large bushes of thorn — the 'nabk,' that kind of which tradition says that the crown of thorns was woven — springing up, like the fruit-trees of the more inland parts, in the very midst of the waving wheat."[3]

HIS METHOD OF TEACHING. 3. **And he spake many things . . . in parables.** Eight are reported.

NOTE. Jesus' method of teaching, and its advantages.

(1) Jesus first states the facts, points to nature's picture. This picture is impressed on the mind as a permanent seed plot, easy to be retained; out of which can come a perpetual harvest of spiritual truths, easily recalled whenever these facts are presented to eye or mind.

(2) This method enables one to plant truth in unwilling minds, shut to other methods of teaching.

[1] Robert Morris.
[2] Prof. W. H. Thomson, M. D., *Parables and Their Home.*
[3] Dean A. P. Stanley, *Sinai and Palestine.*

(3) It illustrates, illuminates the truths, like the sun shining through a stained-glass window.

(4) It puts truth in forms that may gradually unfold under larger experiences, as an acorn develops into an oak.

A PARABLE is a story picture of familiar things, which illustrates, illumines, and impresses some great truth. It is a similitude in narrative form, accepted as true in the familiar sphere, in order to illustrate and establish truths in the higher religious sphere.[1] It is a comparison of facts in an earthly realm with facts in the spiritual realm.

PARABLES FROM NATURE. "'Can you apply a parable?' says one of Robert Louis Stevenson's characters. 'It is not the same thing as a reason, but usually vastly more convincing.' 'Every natural fact is a symbol of some spiritual fact, and no spiritual fact can be understood except by first knowing the natural fact, which is, as it were, its double.'" Illustrations from nature, "all are but letters of the alphabet by which we spell *Influence*."[2]

> "Here is a story book
> Thy Father hath written for thee,—
> Come wander with me, she said,
> Into regions yet untrod,
> And read what is still unread
> In the manuscripts of God."[3]

This world, with all its forces and powers, seems made purposely to express in visible forms, as in an incarnation, the invisible facts of the spiritual world, the spiritual truths we most need in our daily lives. Earthly things are made after the pattern of the heavenly.

> "What if earth
> Be but the shadow of heaven, and things therein
> Each to the other like, more than on earth is thought."[4]

Consider how large a part of our words expressing spiritual things are metaphors,—word parables derived from physical things; as heaven, spirit, heart, courage, vision, angel.

> "Earth 's crammed with heaven,
> And every common bush afire with God."[5]

"Of all the things that a teacher should know how to do, the most important, without any exception, is to be able to tell a story."[6]

I. THE SOWER, vers. 1-9, 19-23.

PARALLELS. Mark 4: 2-20; Luke 8: 4-15.

THE INTERPRETATION is given by Jesus himself in vers. 19-23. It will be given here in connection with the parable.

THE SOWER. 3. **A sower went forth to sow.** "Whosoever soweth the word of God in the hearts of the people is represented by the sower in the parable;" but most especially Jesus Christ, who brought the Word of God from heaven, and by his teaching, his life, and his Gospel sowed the good seed in the hearts of men.

THE SOWING. **Went forth to sow.** (1) The farmers of Palestine, then as now, lived in villages as a protection against robbers, and went forth to the open fields when they would sow. So Jesus went out from heaven to sow good seed in this world. He went out to the people all over the country. So did the apostles go out all over the world scattering the good seed. We must not expect the field to come to us; we must go to the field to be sown. "Go out into the highways and hedges and compel them to come in." (2) The sower sows in the proper season, most of all in the springtime. Late sowings of most seeds are far less effectual. (3) But the sower also sows at all times when there is an opportunity. "In the morning sow thy seed, and in the evening withhold not thy hand." (4) He sows abundantly. Note the great superabundance of seed which God sows in the natural world. One grain of corn in a few years could cover the whole earth with growing corn. There are thousands of times as many seeds as can find room to grow. Mr. Darwin found nearly five hundred seeds in a cupful of mud from the bottom of a pond. This is a type of the abundance of good seed in the spiritual world; of the way we should sow the good seed; of the fact that we should not be disappointed if some of the good seed should fail of good fruit. (5) He is very careful to sow only good seed. (6) He sows by his life, by his words, by his character, by his personal, unconscious influence, by his deeds.

THE SEED (Luke 8: 11) is the Word of God. It is living seed. "Good seed has tremendous vitality. It can handle a million times its own weight of matter, transmuting it from death to life. Hence it is a most expressive symbol to convey the unspeakable vitality of God's words."[7] There is great variety of seed, for all times, and seasons, and soils, and culture. However good the seed, it must be sown in the soil, watered from heaven, and vitalized by the Holy Spirit, as by the sun in the spring. "The kingdom belongs to living, growing things, and is thus subject to the same laws as grain, leaven, mustard seed, and the like."[8]

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[1] The freshest and most original book on the parables is *The Parables by the Lake*, Prof. Wm. H. Thomson, M. D., LL. D., son of the author of the *Land and the Book*. Trench on *The Parables* never grows old. Works on *The Parables*, by Bruce, Jülicher, Taylor, Macdonald, Arnot, Dods, Guthrie.

[2] Walter L. Hervey, Ph. D., ex-President of Teachers' College, New York, in *Picture Work*.

[3] Longfellow.

[4] Milton.

[5] Mrs. Browning.

[6] G. Stanley Hall, Pres. of Clark University.

[7] Bishop Warren.

[8] *Int. Crit. Com.*

4 And when / and as he sowed, some *seeds* fell by the way side, and the fowls / birds came and devoured them: up:

5 Some / and others fell upon stony / the rocky places, where they had not much earth: and forthwith / straightway they sprung / sprang up, because they had no deepness of earth:

6 And / *f* when the sun was up, / risen, they were scorched; and because they had no root, *g* they withered away.

f James 1. 11. *g* John 15. 6.

THE SOIL is the soul of man, including heart, conscience, mind, memory, his whole nature. The person largely determines the kind of soil he will be. "The trampled ground can become soft, the rocky ground deep, and the thorns be rooted out." Therefore no one can excuse himself for being bad soil for the good seed. He can go to God for a new heart, and can be changed into fruitful soil.

THE CULTURE. God gives us only the seeds of the truth, the seeds of his kingdom, the seeds of holy joy and heavenly character, the seeds of usefulness and success, together with all the help we need for their growth and culture. For a good harvest it is absolutely necessary to have three things: the best seed, the best soil, and the best care. "God has done his part. Therefore, the kind of harvest depends on our reception and care of the good seed. All experience tells us that when the ground is broken up by upheavals (as the fields by ploughing and culture) the human heart is oftener ready to receive the seed of the kingdom than before." [1]

GOOD SEED BY THE WAYSIDE, vers. 4, 19. 4. **Some seeds fell by the way side.** "The grain fields are rarely fenced, though the landmarks are definite and plain. There are little paths leading through, hither and thither, some being the highways along which the horsemen ride and asses carry their burdens. It was along such a way as this — a foot or so in width — that the seed fell which the birds of the air immediately devoured." [2] "It is of exactly the same soil as the rest, but many passengers have trodden it hard." **And the fowls** (birds) **came and devoured them,** because they were in sight. "Birds in Syria, and especially about the Lake of Tiberias, are extraordinarily numerous. As Syria is the winter feeding ground of many migratory birds from northern Europe and Asia, this marsh (of the Huleh Lake) is then filled with a greater variety and multitude of waterfowl than I have ever seen elsewhere." "Myriads of crows come from all quarters of the heavens." "At early dawn they begin their calls again, and then make long lines of flight for the nearest wheat fields." "Descending to the plain of Gennesaret, we passed a hillside which was black with over one thousand of them, who were waiting there for the unhappy ploughmen to move far enough away for them to descend on their fields." [1]

19. **Heareth the word . . . and understandeth it not.** For the heart is unprepared to receive it. A thousand cares, and pleasures, and worldly interests have tramped over the heart, so that the good seed cannot sink into it. When one is intensely interested in any one thing, other and better things remain unheeded and make little or no impression. The din and rattle of the streets drown the music of the cathedral chimes. **Then cometh the wicked one,** "the devil" (Luke), **and catcheth** (snatcheth) **away that which was sown.** The great adversary uses various means for this purpose: evil thoughts, selfish interests, doubts, criticisms of the teacher's manner, thoughts of pleasure or of work suggested during prayer or amid the most solemn appeals, neglect to obey the truth heard, which leads to the loss of the truth. As soon as there is the least danger of one's becoming a Christian, he is on hand to prevent it. In the midst of a revival he will set his servants to call away the attention, by innocent amusements, the rush of business, or the pressure of school studies.

Note that the wicked one cannot take away the good seed unless we let him. He cannot destroy the seed if the soil is good.

GOOD SEED ON ROCKY PLACES, vers. 5, 6, 20, 21. 5. **Some fell upon stony** (rocky) **places, where they had not much earth.** It did not fall among stones, for on account of the nature of the rocks "the most vigorous growth of wheat may be seen on land which at first sight seems covered with stones." [1] But it fell on flat stretches of rock thinly covered with an inch or so of soil. Seed on such soil sprang up sooner than the rest, because the dry, underlying rock drew and retained the heat of the sun, and made it, for a time, like a forcing house or hotbed, so that **forthwith** (straightway) **they sprung up.**

6. **When the sun was up, they were scorched.** The sun soon dried up the hot surface soil, which could draw up no moisture from

[1] Prof. W. H. Thomson, *Parables and their Home.*

[2] Prof. I. H. Hall.

7 And some others fell among upon the *h* thorns; and the thorns sprung grew up, and choked them:

h Jer. 4. 3.

the deep earth, and the roots had no depth of soil into which to run and drink in the moisture.[1]

20. **The same is he that heareth the word, and anon** (straightway) **with joy receiveth it.** Their emotions are touched, but the word does not reach their moral nature; and their will and character are unchanged. They are moved by the winds of popular excitement or enthusiasm, but there is no new life. "Their fault is not the mere fact of receiving the word with joy. For joy is a characteristic of deep as well as of shallow natures. *Absence of joys in a religious life is a sign, not of depth, but of dulness.* Joy without thought is a definition of the stony-ground hearer."[2]

21. **Hath he not root in himself.** No deep principle, no real change of heart, no fire within, but only warmth from without. "It is a mistake, however, to confound this class with impulsive characters in general. Persons of an impulsive temperament are often so on account of a naturally strong warmth of feeling, and thus they may be among the best and sweetest persons in the world. Their many mishaps, however, often cause them to be underrated, as inferior to really smaller natures with cooler heads. But it should be remembered that he who never mistook men from the first called the impulsive and oft-stumbling Peter the rock (John 1: 42). The stony-ground hearers, on the other hand, are that numerous class who in any new thing see only its favorable aspects, and sanguinely follow, expecting nothing else. But it takes a deeper nature than theirs to weigh the difficulties which come with all true good in life. Hence they are too weak in soul to encounter difficulties, and with the first experience thereof, as Mark expresses it (R. V.), 'having no root in themselves, straightway they stumble and fall before it.'"[3]

When tribulation. This word "tribulation," both the English and the Latin equivalent of the Greek, is derived from the Latin *tribulum*, which was the threshing instrument or roller whereby the Roman husbandman separated the corn from the husks; and *tribulatio* in its primary significance was the act of this separation. But sorrow, distress, and adversity, being the appointed means for the separating in men of their chaff from their wheat, of whatever in them was light, and trivial, and poor, from the solid and the true, therefore these sorrows were called *tribulations*, threshings, *i. e.*, of the inner spiritual man, without which there could be no fitting him for the heavenly garner.[4] Often numberless small annoyances are greater tribulations than heavy sorrows. A whole army has been defeated by wasps. **Or persecution,** almost certain to arise. **Because of the word.** This would test them whether they were true Christians or had embraced religion for its rewards and pleasures. **He is offended.** Made to stumble.

Good Seed among Thorns. vers. 7, 22. 7. **And some fell among thorns,** "not among *standing* thorns, but among those, beneath the surface, ready to spring up."[5] In good soil, but preoccupied with the roots of thorns. "Here and there we may see small stalks protruding. They are the stumps of the most noxious weed of Gennesaret, the strong and rapidly growing prickly astragalus, a coarse, perennial plant, with its roots penetrating, as we found by experiment, several feet deep, and which the fellahin are too indolent to dig up and extirpate, contenting themselves with chopping down the year's growth with their mattock."[6] "These thorns are not brier bushes or brambles, but an aftergrowth of a variety of thistles, which come up quickly in every wheat field of Palestine, but the natural time for them to appear is after the wheat is ripened. When, therefore, the wheat is reaped, the ground is seen covered with the new green growth of this strong-leaved thistle, which then springs rapidly up to about the same height, and as dense, as the wheat which preceded it. As it dries it turns white, so that at a distance it resembles a harvest field with grain, and thus gives point to the words of Jeremiah (12: 13), 'They have sown wheat, but shall reap thorns,'—a very painful harvest, for the spikes on the thistles' leaves are both long and sharp."[3] **And choked them.** Took up the virtue of the soil and shaded them from the sunshine, so that little of the wheat came to maturity and few of the grains filled out.

22. **The care** (anxiety) **of this world.** The absorption in worldly interests of labor, business, and pleasure. **And the deceitfulness of riches.** Riches which deceive by giving us the impression that they are able to bestow what they cannot give; which make things seem honest which are not so; which are continually luring men on in the search for blessings that elude them. Luke

[1] See Dr. Peabody's *Plutarch on the Delay of Divine Justice*, p. 48. His reference to the "Gardens of Adonis" as applied to vessels or shallow earth beds, where what is sown can only spring up and wither without coming to seed. This term occurs in Plato's *Phædrus*.

[2] Prof. A. B. Bruce.

[3] Prof. W. H. Thomson, M. D.

[4] Arbp. Trench.

[5] Prof. Vincent.

[6] Canon Tristram.

8 But other and others fell into upon the good ground, and brought forth yielded fruit, some an a *i* hundredfold, some sixtyfold, sixty, some thirtyfold. thirty.
9 *j* Who He that hath ears, to hear, let him hear.

i ver. 23. Gen. 26. 12. *j* See ch. 11. 15.

adds the "pleasures of this life." Even pleasures which are right in themselves may become too absorbing, may occupy too much attention, and thus choke the Word.[1]

NOTE. It is not "this world," but the cares of this world, not "riches," but the deceitfulness of riches, that choke the Word. It is the undue longing for riches, whether they are obtained or not, that destroys the power of heavenly things. "As the productive parts of a field in Palestine will sooner or later be covered with these thorns, the lesson of the parable is not that Christians will escape thorny days by rich fruit bearing. Strong and abundant thistles, on the contrary, are signs of naturally good soil. It is Christian to be diligent in business, though the result be increase in the world's goods, with consequent cares and responsibilities. But what a sower in Palestine knows that he should do is to get his seed in early. If he sows too late, his wheat will have a hard contest with the inevitable thorns which will be sure to appear in their time."

"The deceptive resemblance at a distance of a thistle-covered field to one of good grain has its counterpart in many a showy but utterly barren, if not cruel, growth of modern civilization."[2]

Our religious life may be injured by the excess of things which are right in themselves. Trees will not flourish on the north side of the house; nor many flowers under the dense shade of trees; nor religion under the shade of excessive cares and labors to become rich. The demands of society, of business, of pleasures, of household cares, may absorb so much of our time and interest that there is neither time nor strength for religious duties, family and secret prayer, the study of God's word, visiting the sick, comforting the afflicted, helping the poor. The wheat and the thorns are having a great struggle in many of our lives.

IX. GOOD SEED IN GOOD GROUND, vers. 8, 23. 8. **Other fell into good ground.** The larger part of the field sown was of this kind. **And brought forth fruit, some an hundredfold, some sixtyfold, some thirtyfold.** "At Geneva, in 1855, I got from an adjoining field a single ear or spike of barley containing two hundred and seventy-six grains. Trench, in a note, remarks that 'Herodotus mentions that two hundredfold was a common return in the plain of Babylon, and sometimes three; and Niebuhr mentions a species of maize that returns four hundredfold.' In 1868, a year remarkable for its heat in Great Britain, it is mentioned in the newspapers that, in a field of wheat in Kent, there were many single seeds which produced, each, 'thirty straws, topped with closely set and fully developed ears, which yielded between nine hundred and one thousand grains from a single parent seed.'"[3]

"Sixteen years ago a single small coffee plant was sent to Blantyre, Africa, and from it five million coffee trees have since been derived. How like the growth of a good seed and its influence!"

9. **Who hath ears to hear, let him hear.** This is a call to pay special attention to what Jesus had been teaching, implying that there was a deeper spiritual meaning, mines of gold and gems beneath the surface, that would escape the notice of the careless hearer. Prejudice, selfishness, indifference, absorption in the things of this world, false ideas of the kingdom of God and the Messiah, would so dull their ears that they would not hear the great spiritual truths which Jesus was teaching through this parable. "There is a form of deafness known to physicians in which the person affected is able to hear everything except words. In such a case the ear, as an apparatus for mere hearing, may be so perfect that the tick of a watch or the song of a bird is readily appreciated, but owing to a local injury deeper than the ear, for it is in the brain itself, all spoken words of his mother tongue are as unintelligible to the sufferer as those of a foreign language. Give him a book, and he may read as understandingly as ever, but every word addressed to him through his ear reaches his consciousness only as a sound, not as a word. There is a moral deafness which corresponds to this physical infirmity, but which, instead of being rare, is as common as it is harmful and disabling. To all men there is given an inner ear, which has been fashioned to hear Wisdom's words, but that ear often seems so dull of hearing that there appears no sign of response to her utterances."[2] This experience of not hearing by the inner ear is illustrated in every

[1] Compare Ovid's *Metamorphoses*, v. 486 : —

"Now the too ardent sun, now furious showers
With baleful stars, and bitter winds combine
The crop to ravage; while the greedy fowl
Snatch the strown seeds; and grass with stubborn roots,
And thorn and darnel plague the ripening grain."

See Virgil's story of Laocoön and his sons crushed by enfolding serpents.

[2] Prof. W. H. Thomson, M. D., LL. D., in *Parables and their Home*.

[3] Morison.

10 And the disciples came, and said unto him, Why speakest thou unto them in parables?

11 [He] And he answered and said unto them, Because [k] it is given unto you [l] to know [m] the mysteries of the kingdom of heaven, but to them it is not given.

12 [n] For whosoever hath, to him shall be given, and he shall have [more] abundance: but whosoever hath not, [o] from him shall be taken away even that [which] he hath.

k ch. 19. 11. Col. 1. 27. Cp. 1 Cor. 2. 6–10 & 1 John 2. 20, 27. See ch. 11. 25. *l* Wisd. 2. 22. *m* See Rom. 16. 25. *n* ch. 25. 29. Mark 4. 25. Luke 8. 18 & 19. 26. Cp. John 15. 2 & James 4. 6. *o* Cp. Rev. 2. 5.

walk in life. What a man sees in nature, in a book, in a historical fact, depends on what he has within him behind his natural eyes. The eyes and the ears are but the instruments by which are conveyed outward facts to the soul. It is the spiritual eyes and ears which decide what is really seen and heard.[1]

Why Jesus spoke in Parables. 10. **The disciples came** to Jesus some time when he was alone (Mark). It is mentioned here, not because the explanation followed immediately, before he spoke more parables, but to connect the explanation in the record with the parable. They asked the meaning of this parable (Luke), and also **Why speakest thou unto them in parables?** The last question is answered first, as a preparation for the explanation.

First Reason. 11. **Because it is given unto you to know.** It is to enlighten you who have been prepared to understand and use aright the truths set forth by the parables. You have put yourselves under my instructions, you have received some conception of what the kingdom of God is, and of the true Messiah, you have been obedient, and willing to learn and to do. Therefore you are able to understand, and will not pervert your knowledge. And the parables are a method of instruction which will enable you to understand what otherwise would remain a mystery, and which will transfigure, and illumine, and unfold the truth continually more and more as you grow in grace, and knowledge, and experience.

The mysteries, μυστήρια, from μύω, *to close* or *shut*, something from which all but the initiated were shut out. In classic Greek "mystery" is applied to religious ceremonies or celebrations to which no one was admitted except those who were formally initiated. Hence in the New Testament it means that which we would not know unless it was revealed in some way. Not things necessarily hard to understand, but those of which the meaning has not been perceived, and cannot be perceived, except by those who are willing to understand, and have opened their minds to the revelation of God. "Thus Paul, in Phil. 4:12, says, I am *instructed* (μεμύημαι) both to be full and to be hungry, etc. But the R. V. gives more correctly the force of *instructed*, by rendering, *I have* learned the secret; the verb being μυέω (from the same root as μυστήρια), *to initiate* into the mysteries."[2] The general principle is stated in the next verse.

12. **For whosoever hath**, in the sense that the man with the five talents in the parable had, or possessed, that money, by his faithful use of it. That man *has* capital, not who merely holds it in his name or safe, but who knows its powers and capabilities, and how to make it accomplish its purposes. The man with the one talent buried it; he did not have it. **To him shall be given.** Because his use of what he has fits him to use more. He that hath arithmetic can be given algebra. He that hath the alphabet can have all literature. The clerk or apprentice that is faithful in the affairs entrusted to him, so as to have them, can be advanced to better and more skilful work. **Whosoever hath not**, does not make use of so as to gain full possession. **From him shall be taken away even that he hath**, what was entrusted to him. The opportunities pass away, the powers wane, the abilities diminish; the neglected garden runs to weeds; the machinery not used loses its power by rust.[3]

Second Reason. To hide the full truth from those who were prejudiced against him and ever ready to distort and pervert whatsoever he taught, and not only to make it a hindrance to their knowledge of the truth instead of a help, but to use

[1] Compare the German poem ending, —

"The one with yawning made reply,
'What have we seen? Not much have I!
Trees, meadows, mountains, groves, and streams,
Blue sky, and clouds, and sunny gleams.'

"The other, smiling, said the same;
But with face transfigured, and eyes aflame:
'Trees, meadows, mountains, groves, and streams,
Blue sky, and clouds, and sunny gleams.'"

Also the familiar story *Eyes and no Eyes*. Prof. Scripture of Yale, in his *Thinking, Feeling, Doing*, furnishes several illustrations.

[2] Prof. M. R. Vincent, *Word Studies*.

[3] See a capital illustration in Dickens' ingenious story of the Skitzlanders in his *Household Words*.

13 Therefore speak I to them in parables: because *p* they seeing seeing they see not, and hearing they hear not, *q* neither do they understand.

14 And in unto them is fulfilled the prophecy of E-sa'ias, I-sa'iah, which saith, *r* By hearing ye shall hear, and shall not in no wise understand; and And seeing ye shall see, and shall not in no wise perceive:

15 For this people's heart is waxed gross, and And their ears are *s* dull of hearing, and And *t* their eyes they have closed; lest at any time Lest haply they should see perceive with their eyes, and And hear with their ears, and should And *u* understand with their heart, and And should *v* be converted, and turn again, And I should heal them.

p Deut. 29. 4. Jer. 5. 21. Ezek. 12. 2. Rom. 11. 8. 2 Cor. 3. 14 & 4. 4. Cp. Isai. 42. 19, 20. *q* ver. 19, 51. ch. 15. 10 & 16. 12. Mark 8. 21. *r* John 12. 40. Acts 28. 26, 27. Cited from Isai. 6. 9, 10. *s* Cp. Heb. 5. 11. *t* Cp. John 9. 39, 41. *u* Cp. Rom. 10. 10. *v* See Luke 22. 32.

their perversion and distortions to hinder the mission of Jesus, and prevent the people from receiving the truth.

13. **Because they seeing see not** the real meaning; as one seeing a person in a distorting mirror, like those of which there was a whole corridor full at the Paris exposition. Saw him, but did not see him as he really was.

For instance, if Jesus had plainly told the facts about his kingdom, which have since been realized, its true relation to the Jewish commonwealth and the Roman Empire, no power could have made them understand what he said, or kept them from perverting his meaning, from arraying the whole Jewish commonwealth against him, and making him out a traitor to the Roman emperor. And yet he did teach the truth in parables, whose meaning was gradually unfolded in due time; but such stories could not be used to his destruction, and they would be good seed planted in their minds, which would in due time grow into a knowledge of the truth. He wanted them to see, but in order to see truly they must not see till they were able to see correctly.[1]

Moreover the minds of the people, and especially of the Pharisees, were preoccupied with entirely different ideas concerning the kingdom and the Messiah from those presented by Christ, ideas instilled into them from childhood. The king and the kingdom were to excel all nations in worldly power and magnificence, like "Solomon in all his glory." The Messiah was to be a hero warrior, greater than David or Cæsar. "Whose heart, indeed, would not burn, even among ourselves now, at the thought of the avenger of that one scene alone, though there were many others like it, which but a few years before was enacted by the proconsul Varus, when he crucified two thousand of its chosen youths in groups at all the crossroads of the land as a demonstration of what Rome was to them!"[2] There was thus little room in their thoughts for such a Messiah as Jesus, or such a kingdom as he was founding. So they would have made a bad use of the true picture of the future, if they had been shown it.

14, 15. **Fulfilled the prophecy of Esaias,** Isaiah (6: 9, 10). This was spoken in reference to the Jews, 130 to 150 years before their exile, when Isaiah was called to prophesy to them. The prophet was forewarned at the beginning of his mission that he would have but partial success, that their **heart**, the seat of intelligence, the moral nature and the will, **is waxed** (grown) **gross**, "fat," in Isaiah; covered up so that it was difficult to make an impression upon it, so that they would refuse to do right and obey God, and hence be almost exterminated as a nation, their land laid waste, their city and temple destroyed. Yet there was hope, for a remnant would remain faithful. The nation would be cut down like a tree, leaving only a stump, but a new shoot would spring up, the nation would be restored, and the new shoot would be greater than the former tree.

This was almost literally repeated and fulfilled in the time of Christ. He came, like Isaiah, a messenger from God, with warnings and invitations. The Jews, like their ancestors, had their **ears dull of hearing**, and **their eyes they have closed**,[3] **lest at any time they should see** that Jesus was their Messiah, that by receiving and obeying him they could be saved, both individually and as a nation; should see the real meaning

[1] Pres. Noah Porter, in his *Books and Reading*, begins with the description of a South Sea savage in a modern city, and especially in a library, showing to how many things he is blind.

[2] Prof. W. H. Thomson.

[3] Cheyne (*Isaiah*) cites the case of a son of the Great Mogul, who had his eyes sealed up three years by his father as a punishment. Dante pictures the envious, on the second cornice of Purgatory, with their eyes sewed up: —

"'For all their lids an iron wire transpierces,
And sews them up, as to a sparhawk wild
Is done, because it will not quiet stay.'"
(Purgatorio, xiii. 70–72) — M. R. Vincent.

16 But [w] blessed *are* your eyes, for they see: and your ears, for they hear.
17 [w] For verily I say unto you, [x] That many prophets and righteous *men* have desired to see *those things* which ye see, and have not seen *them*; and to hear *those things* which ye hear, and have not heard *them*.
18 ¶ [y] Hear ye therefore the parable of the sower.
19 When any one heareth the word of the kingdom, and [z] understandeth it not, then cometh [b] the wicked one, and catcheth away that which was sown in his heart. This is he which received seed by the way side.
20 But he that received the seed into stony places, the same is he that heareth the word, and anon with joy receiveth it;
21 Yet hath he not root in himself, but [d] dureth for a while: for when tribulation or persecution ariseth because of the word, by and by [e] he is offended.
22 He also that received seed among the thorns, this is he that heareth the word; and [f] the care of this world, and [h] the deceitfulness of riches, choke the word, and he becometh unfruitful.
23 But he that received seed into good ground, this is he that heareth the word, and [a] understandeth it; which also [i] beareth fruit, and bringeth forth, some an hundredfold, some sixty, some thirty.
24 ¶ Another parable put he forth unto them, saying, [k] The kingdom of heaven is likened unto a man which sowed good seed in his field:

w Luke 10. 23, 24. Cp. ch. 16. 17. *x* Heb. 11. 13. 1 Pet. 1. 10–12. Cp. John 8. 56. *y* For vers. 18–23, see Mark 4. 13–20 & Luke 8. 11–15. *z* ver. 38. ch. 4. 23 & 8. 12. *a* See ver. 13. *b* ch. 5. 37 & 6. 13. John 17. 15. Eph. 6. 16. 2 Thess. 3. 3. 1 John 2. 13, 14 & 3. 12 & 5. 18, 19. *c* Cp. Isai. 58. 2 & Ezek. 33. 31, 32 & Mark 6. 20 & John 5. 35. *d* Gal. 1. 6. Cp. Hos. 6. 4 & Gal. 5. 7. *e* See ch. 11. 6. *f* See ch. 6. 25. *g* 2 Tim. 4. 10. *h* 1 Tim. 6. 9, 10, 17. Cp. ch. 19. 23 & Mark 10. 23 & Acts 5. 1–11 & Heb. 3. 13. *i* Hos. 14. 8. John 15. 5, 16. Phil. 1. 11. Col. 1. 6. *j* ver. 8. *k* vers. 37–42. Cp. Mark. 4. 26–29.

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of the kingdom of heaven, and how they might belong to it; lest they should be converted, lit., *should turn again*, from their evil ways into the paths of righteousness, which is conversion; and God should heal them of their sins, their sorrows, and their burdens. Like their ancestors, the Jews of Christ's day were, within forty years, scattered over the earth, their city and temple were destroyed, amid distress and calamities like those which preceded the exile.

16. But in Christ's time, too, there was a remnant, the small new shoot, the select circle of believers, who would grow into a greater kingdom than the Jews ever knew. Blessed are your eyes, for they see, they recognize the Messiah, they hear his voice as the voice of God, they enter the kingdom of heaven.

We need insight, the blinds of the soul thrown open, the windows cleansed, the veil parted, the spiritual ear-trumpet to hear, the telescope to see with, so that we may live in the presence of the great realities of life. "The poetic idealism of to-day will be the prose reality of to-morrow."[1]

17. Many prophets and righteous men have desired to see those things which ye see. The prophets foretold, and the righteous longed and hoped for the coming of the Messiah and the golden age he was to bring. The whole Old Testament points to and prepares for these times.

Vers. 18–23 were commented upon in connection with the parable.

II. PARABLE OF THE WHEAT AND TARES, vers. 24–30, 36–43.

In the last parable we studied about the formation of the kingdom, and the things that hindered men from receiving the truth. In this one we see the good and bad growing together and what to do about it.

The Kingdom of Heaven. 24. The kingdom of heaven is the kingdom which has its origin in heaven, and which Jesus as king came to establish on earth; in which the laws of heaven are obeyed on earth, and thus earth becomes like heaven. It is not a separate enclosure, a bounded kingdom, like the kingdoms of men, but a pervasive spirit embodied in men everywhere, just as Englishmen, in whatever country they live,

[1] Maxwell.

25 But while men slept, his enemy came and sowed tares also among the wheat, and went his way away.

or in whatever business they engage, all over the world, still belong to the kingdom of Great Britain. The members of God's kingdom are represented by the good seed which Jesus sowed in the world.

The Sower of Good Seed, vers. 24, 37. **Likened unto a man which sowed good seed.** The man represents the **Son of man** (ver. 37), who is the source of all good seed. He began in the Garden of Eden, and has been sowing ever since. Every good man, wherever found, is a child of God, born from above by the Spirit, and made alive with the life of God. And Jesus Christ is the medium through which the sowing is done.

The Good Seed, vers. 24, 38. **The good seed are the children of the kingdom** (ver. 38), those who in heart belong to the kingdom, are filled with its spirit, and live according to its principles.

(1.) God's children are seed, not mere grains of sand; for they are living, they are the means of increasing the disciples; through them the whole world is to be filled with the fruits of the Spirit and the children of the kingdom. Dead seeds do not increase. A dead church does not grow; and this is fortunate, for neither God nor man desires an increase of that kind of Christians or churches.[1]

(2.) There is a great variety of good seed adapted to all seasons and all circumstances, producing different kinds of fruit at different times.

(3.) Each produces fruit after its kind. It is necessary to *be* good if we would increase goodness. Imperfect Christians tend to multiply imperfect Christians. Every error or fault of ours is doubly evil; it injures ourselves, and it injures others.

(4.) All Christians are God-planted, planted where he desires them to be, "by the streams of water" (Ps. 1: 3). Professor Vincent on this Psalm says: "The gospel man is not like a tree which grows wild. He is like a tree planted, and that in a place which will best promote his growth. 'Ye have not chosen me, but I have chosen you, and *planted* you' (the true rendering of *ordained* in John 15 : 16). He is always planted by rivers of water. Men find these channels in the most unlikely places; in the most unpromising parts of God's garden," as amid troubles, difficulties, bereavements, sickness.

The Field sown, vers. 24, 38. **The field is the world.** It is not the church, but the whole world; not Christian lands, but all lands in which the true church is the good seed. **In his field.** The whole world belongs rightfully to Christ. The sowing of tares is a usurpation. Christ "came unto *his own*."

The Tares among the Wheat, vers. 25, 26, 38, 39. 25. **But while men slept**, *i. e.*, at night, in secret. It was not when the sower slept, for "he that keepeth Israel shall neither slumber nor sleep;" nor when the church is asleep, for Satan is often most busy sowing tares when the church is awake and in earnest, but secretly, unobserved, unrecognized. **His enemy.** The wicked one, the devil (vers. 38, 39). He was the original source of evil among men. He seeks to implant and cultivate his character in them, in order to make them as bad as himself, and thus destroy the kingdom of God, to which he is opposed. It is a part of the great conflict between good and evil.

> "Wherever God erects a house of prayer,
> The devil always builds a chapel there."

Sowed tares among the wheat.[2] Tares "are not a degenerate kind of wheat, as both the natives and many commentators have imagined, but a distinct species, which has no original relationship to wheat or barley."[3] "In the Oriental wheat fields the most troublesome weed of all is the *zuwan* of the Arabs, the 'tares' (*zizania*) of our version, commonly called 'darnel,' *Polium temulentum* of botanists. It belongs to the rye-grass family, and very closely resembles in general

[1] See E. E. Hale's *Ten Times One Is Ten.*

[2] One or two curious examples may be interesting and instructive. (1) In *The Land of the Kangaroo*, we are told how an enthusiastic Scotchman brought with him to Australia a thistle plant on his return from Scotland. It was welcomed by a great dinner, of which the thistle was the centrepiece. Speeches were made and congratulations offered. But the thistle soon scattered its seeds, till thistles became one of the great pests of the country, and an act of Parliament was passed for their destruction. Our Pacific coast has had a somewhat similar experience with the Canada thistle.

(2) A few years ago, a French professor living in Medford, near Boston, was studying an imported gypsy moth in the interests of science, when by accident the caterpillars crawled out, or the eggs blew out of his house, and thus went forth a brood of troubles like those which flew from the famed Pandora's box. The scientist gave notice of the danger, but it seemed insignificant. But ten or fifteen years later the citizens of Medford were filled with consternation to see their trees, flowers, shrubs, vegetables, and other crops devastated as by a consuming fire. They fought them in vain. The State of Massachusetts has already, 1899, within ten years, appropriated nearly a million dollars to extirpate the pest, and Professor Fernald thinks it will take about a million and a half dollars more for ten years, to destroy this devastating evil.

[3] Prof. Thomson.

26 But when the blade [was sprung] sprang up, and brought forth fruit, then appeared the tares also.

27 So [And] the servants of the householder came and said unto him, Sir, didst [not thou] thou not sow good seed in thy field? [from] whence then hath it tares?

28 He [And he] said unto them, An enemy hath done this. The [And the] servants [said] say unto him, Wilt thou then that we go and gather them up?

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appearance the rye-grass largely cultivated in our pastures for fodder, and which has been introduced from Europe into America. Darnel is a common corn-field weed in southern Europe and all the Mediterranean countries. It is an annual, and in the earlier stages of its growth cannot be discriminated from wheat ; but the moment the ear is developed the difference is unmistakable. Hence it is not till nearly harvest time that it can be safely weeded out, — when, if the field is much infested by it, it is pulled up by the women and carried away in bundles, to use as fuel for their ovens. Darnel has this remarkable peculiarity, that it is the only grass with which we are acquainted, the seeds of which are poisonous ; hence the danger of the darnel growing among the wheat, for if any of the seed should, through imperfect winnowing, remain mingled with the wholesome grain, serious consequences might result. The seeds, when eaten, produce giddiness, stupor, and even death ; they are not less noxious to animals and birds." [1] He says that in our northern climate the quick grass (*Triticum repens*, witch-grass), very like wheat in general appearance, takes the place of tares in the wheat fields, and though not poisonous is more mischievous.

" Trench relates a similar trick of malice from Ireland, where he knew an outgoing tenant who, in spite at his ejection, sowed wild oats in the fields of the proprietor, which ripened and seeded themselves before the crops, so that it became next to impossible to get rid of them. Dr. Alford, too, mentions that a field belonging to him in Leicestershire, England, was maliciously sown with charlock, and that heavy damages were obtained by the tenant against the offender." [2]

THE INTERPRETATION. (1) **The tares are the children of the wicked one** (ver. 38), who are filled with his spirit, live according to his principles, and are under his control. They are not a degenerate form of virtue, but as distinct as virtue and vice. They often resemble the good till the fruit begins to appear, but they are as different as wheat and tares, as thistles and roses.

(2) We must expect to find bad men in the church, in every reform, in every good cause. It is folly to say with some that we will not join any society that has bad men in it.

(3) " As there are tares in the vegetable world, so most people have some tares in their characters, — fierce passions among holy emotions, bad principles in intellectual systems, dangerous notions mingled with the loftiest piety." [3]

(4) The better the soil for wheat, the better it is for tares. The more the ground is prepared for the good, the more earnest Satan is to plant the bad. There are a thousand weeds sown in a garden to one in the Sahara sands. There are many more evils in the civilized land, made so by Christian principles, than in the wilds of savage life. Dr. Thomson says : " Hence have come the sad disappointments of many reformers, who, while rejoicing at the doing away of old evils, as if every evil would then cease, have quite forgotten how men with selfish instincts would find this newly prepared field good for them also." We are to measure the values not by counting the weeds, but by the number and usefulness of the good plants.

(5) We distinguish tares from wheat by the fruit. Some of the worst things pose as virtues at the beginning, but results will tell. Hence one value of reading history.

26. **Brought forth fruit, then appeared the tares also.** When the grain is headed out ; there " can be no mistake then. As once I heard it remarked in that country, ' the ears which God has blessed bow their heads, but these accursed tares stick theirs above the whole field ! ' For the tare then carries a tall light head of small dark grains, which in every respect contrasts with the weighty golden ear of the good seed." [4]

(6) But all through their existence there was a difference in the inner life ; and the difference in the harvest is the result of this difference in nature.

(7) Satan uses various means for sowing his tares. Often good men and wise unintentionally help him.

> " The lie brought forth others,
> Dark sisters and brothers,
> And fathers and mothers,
> A horrible crew."

27. **The servants of the householder.** The officers and leaders in the church.

THE TARES AND WHEAT GROWING TOGETHER.

28. **Wilt thou then that we . . . gather them**

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[1] Canon Tristram, in *Sunday-School Times*.
[2] Prof. Philip Schaff, LL. D.
[3] Bp. H. W. Warren.
[4] Prof. Thomson, M. D.

29 But he (said, saith,) *l* Nay; lest (haply) while ye gather up the tares, ye root up (also) the wheat with them.

30 Let both grow together until the harvest: and in the time of (the) harvest I will say to the reapers, Gather (ye together first, up) the tares, and bind them in bundles to burn them: but *m* gather the wheat into my barn.

l Cp. 1 Cor. 4. 5. *m* ch. 3. 12.

up? The tares ought not to be there. They are an evil. Let us root them out.

29. **Nay.** This plan was forbidden (1) because to root out the tares would ruin the crop, and defeat the purpose for which the good seed was sown. **Lest while ye gather up the tares, ye root up also the wheat.** Because there was danger of mistaking the wheat for tares; because the roots of the two were intertwined together; and because the wheat would be trodden down by any one going through it for the purpose. Good and evil are so mingled in this world that it is impossible wholly to separate them in this life without ruining the good as well as the evil, and making a desert instead of a somewhat weedy garden.[1] Persecution injures the good far more than it helps it, and sows another kind of tares in the place of those which it roots up. Persecutors, in trying to root out the bad, are often grievously mistaken, and root up the finest of the wheat instead. (2) It is wise to let the moral wheat and tares grow together, because the wheat may have a good influence over the tares, and change them into wheat. This is expressed a few verses later in the parable of the leaven. The truth, coming into contact with men who are now tares because they have the nature of their father the devil, the wicked one, may drive out the tare nature, and replace it with the wheat nature. "Cultivation, improvement by tillage, has done a good deal for some weeds. The potato used to be called a weed, but we do not call it so now, because, by much care and attention, it has become useful, profitable, and far from troublesome to man. I think the tomato was once called a weed also. You can see why it is no longer. Perhaps some of you can remember, or find out, about other plants that have lost the odious title."[2] (3) Christians themselves are educated and disciplined by contact with the tares. They would not be nearly so good if shut off in a community by themselves. Tares would still come in. If the wheat does not seek to change the tares into wheat, the wheat will degenerate into tares. This is always so when good people would fence themselves in from all contact with the world, whether by monasteries and convents, or by exclusiveness of churches, or neglect of missionary work, whether home or foreign. Bishop Warren says: "Some would like the devil to be killed by God; it is better that he be killed by us. So far as his influence is concerned, this is possible."

The Harvest Time, vers. 30, 39. **Let both grow together until the harvest,** which takes place at **the end of the world** (ver. 39), or age. In the original the word "world" (*αἰών*) here is an entirely different word from that translated "world" in ver. 38. It does not refer to the physical world, but to the present era, or age, which ends at the day of judgment and the coming of the Son of man. **Say to the reapers. The reapers are the angels** (ver. 39). (Matt. 16: 27; 24: 31; 2 Thess. 1: 7.) **Gather ye together first the tares.** These were gathered out as far as possible in stalks bearing their heads of seed. But in addition to this, since flour "of mixed wheat and tares cannot be given even to animals, all the baskets of wheat are carried from the threshing-floor to the flat roofs of their houses, where they are emptied out on mats, and the tedious separation of grain from grain is carried on, sometimes for days, until the wheat is finally rid of this unhappy admixture."[3] **To burn them.** So as to destroy their power of evil, and to keep them from spreading. **They shall gather out of his kingdom all things that offend** (ver. 41). That cause others to stumble in the path of righteousness. These, and they **which do iniquity** themselves, shall be cast into a **furnace of fire,** where **there shall be wailing and gnashing of teeth** (ver. 42), showing the terrible result of being tares. (1) This is all they are fit for. No other end is possible. Evil must be destroyed. (2) It is a just punishment. It grows out of their very nature, as Sodom was consumed through the inflammable material in it. (3) It is intended to keep wickedness from spreading and destroying all the good, just as weeds are burned to keep them from multiplying and destroying the good grain.

Gather the wheat into my barn, where it will be preserved, and accomplish the end for which it was sown. **Then** (ver. 43), when separated from evil, **shall the righteous shine forth as the sun.** The Greek word means bursting forth into light as from behind a cloud. This

[1] See Hawthorne's story of "The Birthmark," in his *Mosses from an Old Manse.*

[2] Juniata Stafford in *Sunday-School Times.*

[3] Prof. W. H. Thomson.

31 ¶ Another parable put (set) he forth unto (before) them, saying, [n] The kingdom of heaven is
like (unto) [o] a grain of mustard seed, which a man took, and sowed in his field:
32 Which (which) indeed is the least of (less than) all seeds: but when it is grown, it is the greatest among (greater than the)
herbs, and becometh a tree, so that the birds of the air (heaven) come and lodge in the
branches thereof.

n For ver. 31, 32, see Mark 4. 30–32 & Luke 13. 18, 19. *o* ch. 17. 20. Luke 17. 6.

is the symbol of gladness, of truth, of glory, of life in themselves, and of giving light, and life, and cheer to all around. (See Dan. 12 : 3.) "Take away the dross from the silver, and there comes forth a vessel for the refiner."

PRACTICAL. (1) Here are found hope and cheer amid times of opposition and the flourishing of evil. (2) Make the evil help the good. Overcome the evil by cherishing and strengthening the good. Putting a plant from the hothouse out of doors for freer growth often gives it the victory over the insects which are destroying it. (3) Only at harvest time, and only by God's angels, can there be a complete separation of all evil from all good.

III. PARABLE OF THE MUSTARD SEED, vers. 31, 32.

31. **Another parable.** To show another side of the kingdom of God and thus correct any mistakes which are sure to rise if only one side is seen.

31, 32. **Like to a grain of mustard seed, . . . which indeed is the least of all seeds.** Not the least of all seeds which botanists know, but the smallest of the seeds the people daily used; and the smallest of these in contrast with the plant which grows from it. **Greatest among herbs, and becometh a tree.** Not massive like a fir tree of Lebanon, or oak, but an herb so large that **the birds of the air come and lodge in the branches thereof.** It became the greatest of the kind that grew from such seeds.

THE APPLICATION. (1) The emphasis here is on the smallness of the beginnings of Christianity. No sect, no party in Palestine, no known nation began in so small, unnoticed, and apparently feeble a manner, — the teaching of a poor, unlearned man, without army, or money, or political influence; a teaching hidden in the hearts of a few disciples, unseen and unrecognized as a power. (Compare Dan. 2 : 35, 45; Ps. 72 : 16.) [1]

(2) The seed though small was alive with a persistent life.

(3) The plant represents the outward organized kingdom of God, which is to-day the greatest and most powerful kingdom in the world, and has not yet attained its growth.

(4) It grows not only from its inner life, but absorbs its elements from the air, and earth, and water. So grows the kingdom of God from within, but it absorbs into it all the forces of education, science, wealth, organization, commerce, discoveries.

(5) The branches may represent "the various divisions and portions of his kingdom in different countries and in different methods of work, all filled with his one life; and in the soul, the various faculties it controls, the various directions of religious development, in thought, feeling, work." [2]

(6) The birds of the air may refer to the systems of thought, institutions, hospitals, colleges, sciences, educational discoveries, all the methods and appliances of civilization which flourish best and most under the shadow of Christianity. Also to the fact that Christianity gives shelter to the weary, the wandering, and the oppressed.

(7) "The *individual* application points to the small beginnings of divine grace; a word, a thought, a passing sentence may prove to be the little seed which eventually fills and shadows the whole heart and being, and calls all thoughts, all passions, all delights, to come and shelter under it." [3]

(8) This parable is full of hope for all Christian teachers and workers who are apt to be discouraged at the smallness of the seed they plant and its often unnoticed growth.[4]

"Out of the shadows of night
The world rolls into light;
It is daybreak everywhere."

[1] See this fact illustrated by the contrast between the fruit-tree of Mohammedanism, and the fruit-tree of Christianity, in Professor Thomson's *Parables and Their Home*, pp. 91–96.

[2] Prof. Alexander.

[3] Dean Alford.

[4] Dr. Dorchester's *Religious Progress of the World* and Dr. A. F. Schauffler's *Progress of Missions* give statistics and diagrams showing in most interesting and vivid ways how wonderfully the religion of Christ has progressed in the world.

A. D.	1000	50 millions	in Christian lands.		
"	1500	100	"	Doubled in	500 years.
"	1800	200	"	"	300 "
"	1880	415	"	"	80 "

33 Another parable spake he unto them; [p] The kingdom of heaven is like unto leaven, which a woman took, and hid in [q] three measures of meal, till [r] the whole was it was all leavened.

34 [s] All these things spake Jē'sus in parables unto the multitude in parables; multitudes; and without a parable spake he not nothing unto them:

35 That that it might be fulfilled which was spoken by the prophet, saying, [t] I will

p Luke 13. 20. 21. *q* Gen. 18. 6. *r* 1 Cor. 5. 6. Gal. 5. 9. *s* ver. 3. Mark 4. 33, 34. Cp. John 16. 25, 29. *t* Cited from Ps. 78. 2.

IV. PARABLE OF THE LEAVEN, ver. 33.

33. **Spake he unto them.** To the people on the seashore. **The kingdom of heaven is like unto leaven.** Leaven among the Jews generally consisted of a lump of old dough, in a high state of fermentation, inserted in the bread preparatory to baking. The Greek comes from a word meaning *to boil*, while the English *leaven* is from the Latin *levare*, to raise. **Which a woman took.** Breadmaking usually devolved upon women. **Three measures of meal.** The Greek word for *measure* here denotes a Hebrew *seah*, a measure equal to five or six quarts, the ordinary measure for household purposes. The three measures would therefore contain an *ephah*, or about a bushel. This was a large quantity of meal to be transformed by a very small quantity of leaven.

New Light from Modern Science. "To this parable of the leaven modern science gives a peculiar significance which was wholly unknown in the times when the parable was first uttered. Then, and until very lately, it was supposed that the leavening of bread was caused by an inanimate material acting by purely physical processes upon the meal which it fermented. Pasteur has demonstrated, to the acceptance of the whole scientific world, that ferments are not portions of lifeless organic matter, but are actually living organisms, and that the fermentation which they occasion is a necessary consequence or manifestation of their vital activity and growth." [1]

"*One part mixed with two thousand parts will change the whole* in a few hours. It had long been a mystery how so small a quantity of one substance should be able to effect such a change upon so large a mass of another. But the discovery that leaven contains a *fungous plant* which multiplies with prodigious rapidity, and is sustained by the matter into which the leaven is introduced, furnishes an explanation." [2]

Applications. (1) "This parable relates, not to the outward, visible increase which the kingdom is destined to undergo, but to the inward transformation it will effect." [3] It operates silently, without observation, but with constantly increasing pervasiveness till the whole mass of mankind, all hearts, all nations, all commerce and business, social life, and political institutions, shall be transformed.

(2) It is continually working upon that which is next to it; it works from particle to particle, from individual to individual. "Each true Christian, leavened by Christianity, operates as leaven upon his neighbor." [4]

(3) It transforms into its own nature that with which it comes in contact. Hence it is of the utmost importance that the leaven should be pure, that the Christian character should be as perfect as possible in doctrine and in life.

"Wild" Yeast. "The desired result is often utterly vitiated by the contamination of the proper ferment by the entrance with it of some form of what is technically termed a 'wild' yeast, which may grow so as wholly to supplant with its evil working the action of a 'cultivated' yeast. How to procure a 'pure' yeast is, therefore, one of the most carefully investigated problems of this branch of economic chemistry." [1]

(4) Indirect Action of Leaven. "One result of the action of these living cells is the formation of what may be termed pervasive chemical principles, which extend to some distance from the cells into the surrounding fermentable material, profoundly, though at first scarcely visibly, modifying it and preparing it for the subsequent extension to it of the growing ferment." [1] So Christianity extends its influence far beyond its actual disciples and modifies almost everything in Christian lands, as there is a penumbra of partial light far beyond the direct rays of the sun.

34. **Without a parable spake he not unto them** at this time. He was planting good seed for a future harvest.

35. **Fulfilled which was spoken by the prophet,** in Ps. 78: 2. The inscription at the head of the psalm ascribes it to Asaph. "That which

[1] Prof. W. H. Thomson.

[2] President Hitchcock, in *Religious Truths Illustrated by Science.*

[3] Prof. A. B. Bruce.

[4] See E. E. Hale's *Ten Times One Is Ten.*

open my mouth in parables; [u] I will utter things [v] which have been kept secret hidden from the foundation of the world.

36 Then Jesus sent he left the multitude away, multitudes, and went into [w] the house: and his disciples came unto him, saying, [x] Declare Explain unto us the parable of the tares of the field.

37 He And he answered and said, unto them, He that soweth the good seed is the Son of man;

38 The and the field is the world; and the good seed, these are the [y] children sons of the kingdom; but and the tares are [z] the children sons of the wicked evil one;

39 The and the enemy that sowed them is the devil: and [a] the harvest is [b] the end of the world; and the reapers are the angels.

40 As therefore the tares [c] are gathered up, and burned in the with fire; so shall it be in [b] the end of this the world.

41 [d] The Son of man shall send forth his angels, and they shall gather out of his kingdom all [e] things that offend, cause stumbling, and [f] them which that do iniquity;

42 [g] And and shall cast them into a the furnace of fire: [h] there shall be wailing the weeping and gnashing of teeth.

43 Then shall [i] the righteous shine forth as the sun [j] in the kingdom of their Father. [k] Who He that hath ears, to hear, let him hear.

44 ¶ Again, the The kingdom of heaven [l] is like unto a treasure hid hidden in a the field; the which when a man hath found, he hideth, and hid; and for in his joy thereof he [m] goeth and selleth all that he hath, and [n] buyeth that field.

u Cp. ver. 11 & Rom. 16. 25, 26 & 1 Cor. 2. 7. *v* ch. 25. 34. Luke 11. 50. Heb. 4. 3, *al.* Cp. John 17. 24 & Eph. 1. 4 & 1 Pet. 1. 20. *w* ver. 1. *x* vers. 24–30. Cp. ch. 15. 15. *y* ch. 8. 12. Cp. ver. 43. *z* John 8. 44. Acts 13. 10. 1 John 3. 10. Cp. ch. 23. 15. See ver. 19. *a* Joel 3. 13. Rev. 14. 15. *b* ver. 49. ch. 24. 3 & 28. 20. Cp. Dan. 12. 13 & Heb. 9. 26. *c* John 15. 6. Cp. ch. 3. 12. *d* ch. 24. 31. *e* ch. 16. 23 & 18. 7. Cp. Zeph. 1. 3. *f* ch. 7. 23. *g* ver. 50. Rev. 9. 2. Cp. Rev. 19. 20 & 20. 10. *h* See ch. 8. 12. *i* Prov. 4. 18. Dan. 12. 3. Cp. 1 Cor. 15. 41, 42. *j* Cp. ver. 38 & ch. 25. 34 & 26. 29 & Luke 12. 32. *k* See ch. 11. 15. *l* Prov. 2. 4. *m* Cp. ch. 25. 9 & Prov. 23. 23 & Phil. 3. 7, 8. *n* Cp. Isai. 55. 1 & Rev. 3. 18.

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the Old Testament prophet says of himself finds its fittest expression, its highest realization, in the Great Prophet of the kingdom of heaven." [1]

I will utter (ἐρεύξομαι), originally "*to belch, to disgorge.* Homer uses it of the sea *surging* against the shore (*Iliad*, xvii. 265); Pindar of the eruption of Ætna (*Pyth.* 1: 40). There seems to lie in the word a sense of *full, impassioned* utterance, as of a prophet." [2] **Things which have been kept secret from the foundation of the world.** The Psalmist proceeds to rehearse the history of Israel, because under it are veiled moral principles and truths which the Jews had not recognized in God's dealings with them. The history is "one long Old Testament parable." It was an example of God's providential dealings, a type and prefiguration of his dealings also with the Jews in Christ's day. A new meaning was now being revealed, which no past generation had understood or could understand.

36. **Then Jesus . . . went into the house,** the one mentioned in 13: 1, from the boat, from which he had been speaking to the multitudes on the shore. Here he could explain things to the twelve and other devoted disciples, and speak some parables especially to them. **Declare unto us.** (The explanation is given in connection with the parable.)

V. THE HID TREASURE, ver. 44.

44. **Again.** This parable and the next were spoken in the house to the disciples alone. They represent different phases of the same truth. **The kingdom of heaven is like unto treasure hid in a field.** The hiding of treasure is necessary where there are no banks, where massacres are frequent, and where there is great difficulty in transferring such treasure from one country to another. In the unsettled state of the country often the owners never returned, and all knowledge of the treasure was lost.

"The land of the parables," says Prof. Thomson, "is, in fact, undoubtedly full of such buried treasures, for scarce a year passed of my resi-

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[1] Perowne on *The Psalms.*

[2] Prof. M. R. Vincent, in *Word Studies.*

45 ¶ Again, the kingdom of heaven is like unto a merchant man, or man that is a merchant seeking goodly pearls:

46 Who, when he had or having found *o* one pearl of great price, he *m* went and sold all that he had, and *n* bought it.

o ch. 7. 6. Job 28. 18 (mg.). Cp. Prov. 3. 14, 15 & 8. 11, *al.*

dence there in which I did not hear of such discoveries," as one he describes as taking place during his residence in Sidon, when some peasants, while digging trenches for planting orange trees, found three or four boxes of gold coins of Philip of Macedon and "of Alexander the Great, of the most beautiful workmanship, appearing as if they had been just struck from the mint. They were probably deposited by some embezzler among Alexander's own army officials." **Selleth all that he hath, and buyeth that field.** "It can be readily appreciated that to any one of that poverty-stricken band the disparity between the worth of the least of these gold pieces and the utmost reward of his daily toil (12 cents a day of our money) would make him willing to part with all his worldly goods, if so he could gain that treasure." [1] Jesus says nothing of the morality of the man who bought the field, but simply refers to a familiar fact, to illustrate his point.

VI. THE PEARL OF GREAT PRICE, vers. 45, 46.

45. **Like unto a merchant man, seeking goodly pearls.** "The representation indicates the antiquity of a still existing Oriental profession, that of travelling jewellers, persons who deal in precious stones and pearls, and go about seeking for opportunities of making advantageous purchases or exchanges, and taking journeys to remote countries for this purpose, and again in another direction to find the best market for the valuables they have secured. In the course of their operations it frequently happens that they meet with some rich and costly gem, for the sake of obtaining which they sell off all their existing stock, and every article of valuable property they may possess, in order to raise the purchase money. Indeed, the jewellers of the East, as a body, are perhaps the greatest travellers in the world." [2]

46. **Found one pearl of great price.** "A pearl of the first quality is unquestionably the most beautiful object in nature. However brilliant the hard and cold diamond may be, yet it cannot approach in loveliness the bright but delicate lustre of the pearl. The worth is always intrinsic, and wholly dependent on its own properties. Hence the very great difference in pearls. There are natural pearls of a beautiful form and ample size, which, however, do not display those wonderful reflections of white light mingled with azure which command a great price." [1]

"The old writers speak of it as altogether wonderful, and to be honored above all jewels that the eyes of man have beheld. Nothing else was so pure, so rare, so exquisite. As for its origin, they thought it was at first a drop of dew from heaven, condensed within the seashell, and doubling there its native perfections." "Its iridescence seemed the result of sympathy with the seven colors of the sunbeam." [3] Julius Cæsar gave Servilia, the mother of Brutus, a pearl worth 6,000,000 sesterces ($240,000). The famous pearl which Cleopatra dissolved at a feast, and then drank to the health of Marc Antony, was one of a pair set in earrings, and said to be worth $400,000 of our money when the purchasing power of money was ten or fifteen times as great as now.[4] **Sold all that he had and bought it,** see above, the quotation from Kitto. It was worth more than all other things they possessed.

Practical. The above two parables present the same great truth under different aspects.

(1) The kingdom of heaven, by what it is, by what it gives to those who enter, by what it makes of them, is the most precious thing within the power of man to receive and enjoy. All other things together are of less value.

(2) The kingdom of heaven is like *hidden* treasure. Its value is not recognized by many. They are in the midst of it, it is on every hand, but they know no more its value than did the children in South Africa whom the traveller found playing with diamonds, thinking them to be common pebbles. He saw their value, and the African diamond mines were discovered. All the inventions of modern civilization, countless treasures, were hidden from almost every one a century ago. Even to those who do know something of the kingdom of heaven, there are vast realms of blessings as yet unseen and unknown. New ex-

[1] *The Parables and Their Home.* Prof. Thomson also speaks of the finding of a similar treasure graphically described in the *Reminiscences of the Great Mutiny*, by W. Forbes Mitchell, p. 152. Some soldiers of the English army in India "raised from a well at Poona boxes containing money valued at £306,250, besides plate and other valuables said to be worth more than a million sterling, which had been secreted there by Nana Sahib in his flight from Cawnpore."

[2] Kitto, in *Pictorial Bible.*

[3] Rev. Morgan Dix, D. D.

[4] See Harper's new *Dictionary of Classical Literature.*

47 ¶ Again, the kingdom of heaven is [p] like unto a net, that was cast into the sea, and [q] gathered of every kind:

[p] ch. 4. 19. [q] Cp. ver. 38 & ch. 22. 10 & 25. 2.

periences and deeper study reveal new preciousness in religion and in Christ, as the telescope and microscope reveal wonders in the world wholly unseen by the natural eyes. Science has not created a new world, but only revealed more treasures in the old world. We do not need a new Gospel any more than we need a new world, but only a fuller vision of the treasures in the old Gospel.

(3) There are two kinds of treasures in the kingdom of heaven: 1. Those which belong to all who enter the kingdom, salvation, forgiveness, the promises, heaven, a new life, new hopes, new aims. These are to increase in value, to develop. They are beginnings, which are to grow continually, till the whole man is transfigured by the grace of God. 2. Other treasures are like the pearl, of which Mr. Dieulafait says: "Of all the objects employed as ornaments, the pearl is almost the only one which derives nothing from art. On the contrary, all attempts to give it more value only end in deteriorating it." We cannot increase the love of God, or the gift of his Son, or the truths of the Gospel, or the blessedness of heaven. But we can learn more of their value, we can see them more clearly, as we can a landscape when the mists are blown away.

(4) There are two ways of obtaining the treasures: 1. The finding of the hidden treasure "might occur to any one, though in fact it usually comes to a poor workingman while engaged in his ordinary daily toil, and because he happened to be so engaged."[1] Every true disciple has found the great treasure. 2. But the pearl merchant "devotes himself to a definite search, for which he has undergone a long training, so that he can appreciate the different values between pearls, while he never ceases to hope that he will yet gain possession of some unequalled prize which will crown the labor of his life. Special knowledge, indeed, of the highest order is requisite on the part of a pearl merchant."[1] The pearl was sought with great exertions, and often with great danger. The highest experiences, the noblest character, the greatest usefulness, the truest wisdom, the loftiest and clearest truths, the best of the kingdom of heaven, are never found accidentally, but are the reward of long and patient search.

(5) In all cases none can obtain the blessings of the kingdom of heaven without selling all they have to obtain it. This one thing must be first, and all other things subordinate. Everything inconsistent with it must be put away, "even as a man," says Trench, "would willingly fling down pebbles and mosses, which hitherto he had been gathering, and with which he had filled his hands, if pearls and precious stones were offered him in their stead." And not merely some fortunate one here and there, as with worldly pearls and treasure, but every one can possess the treasures of the kingdom. "The precious pearl of the parable does not preclude there being in the world many other beautiful and costly gems which are worth seeking and possessing. It only enjoins the search for the one pearl which will be worth presenting to the king, and it implies that the knowledge of all true pearls, instead of hindering, will rather assist the more in finding this greatest of them all."[1]

VII. PARABLE OF THE DRAW-NET, vers. 47–50.

47. **The kingdom of heaven is like unto a net.** A very long and large net or seine, with floats to keep one edge at the surface, and sinkers to keep the other deep in the water. This net is swept around a shoal of fishes by means of boats, the two ends brought together, and all drawn to the shore. The parable of the tares referred to the good and evil in the wide world; this, to the good and evil within the limits of the church itself.

And gathered of every kind. "Among those gathered within the net at one time was a large shoal of sting-rays, a fish which is a flat, leathery, ungainly-looking creature, resembling our flounder, but armed with a long tapering tail ending in a barbed spine, which is a dangerous weapon both for offence and defence. When these are numerous, other fishes are apt to be scarce in the catch, and so the baskets were but half filled, while the discarded rays were left upon the sand. At times the dreaded electrical torpedo is landed, while at others the Sidon fishermen are driven to distraction by immense shoals of sardines, for, as the Arabs do not know how to preserve them, they simply leave them to poison the air with their decaying heaps. At no time is their catch good throughout, for the Mediterranean teems with a wonderful variety of life, including 'each kind of badness' as every fisherman there will feelingly tell you."[1]

Good and bad were to be brought into the Church in the very act of seeking for good or that which becomes good, because the Church can

[1] Prof. Wm. H. Thomson, *The Parables and Their Home.*

48 Which, which, when it was full, filled, [r] they drew to shore, up on the beach; and they sat down, and gathered the good into vessels, but cast the bad they cast away.

49 So shall it be at in [s] the end of the world: the angels shall come forth, and [t] sever the wicked from among the just, righteous,

50 [u] And and shall cast them into the furnace of fire: [u] there shall be wailing the weeping and gnashing of teeth.

51 Je'sus saith unto them, [v] Have ye understood all these things? They say unto him, Yea, Lord.

52 Then said he And he said unto them, Therefore every [w] scribe [x] *which is* instructed unto who hath been made a disciple to the kingdom of heaven is like unto a man *that is* an that is a householder, which [y] bringeth forth out of his treasure *things* things new and old.

53 ¶ And it came to pass, *that* when Jē'sus had finished these parables, he departed thence.

r John 21. 11. *s* See ver. 39. *t* ch. 25 32. Cp. ver. 41. *u* See ver. 42. *v* vers. 10–16. Cp. John 10, 6 & 16. 29. *w* ch. 23. 34. *x* ch. 28. 19. *y* Cp. ch. 12. 35.

no more read the hearts of men than the fishermen can see the kinds of fish which the seine is gathering from the sea. The sting-rays, the torpedoes, and the sardines, insignificant in themselves but troublesome from their numbers, are all types of men who have been brought unwittingly into the Church, but do not belong there. This is true, in varying degrees, of all ages and all churches. It is true of revivals, and all seasons of ingathering. And there is no process of exclusion which can wholly prevent it.

48. **Gathered the good into vessels.** These were preserved for their proper use.

49, 50. **End of the world**, etc. See on vers. 40–42.

CONCLUSION, vers. 51, 52.

51. **Have ye understood all these things?** They did understand much of this teaching with the aid of Jesus' own interpretations. How much of all the possible contents they could not tell. **They say unto him, Yea, Lord.** Not that we are to suppose that they understood the things to their summits and their depths. Who even yet has thus exhausted or comprehended them? But they saw light streaming through them. It was light from heaven; it would increase; and by and by they would be able to see more and more clearly, more and more minutely, more and more comprehensively, farther up, farther down, farther out, and farther in.[1]

52. **Therefore**, because you have understood, **every scribe which is instructed**, discipled, made a disciple or learner, **unto the kingdom of heaven**, in distinction to the scribes of the Jewish law. **Bringeth forth**, flings out, throws forth with vigor and zeal, **out of his treasure**, treasury, store-house, as water bursts forth from a full vessel. **Things new and old.** Some of the new things are far better than the old. Sometimes the old are better. Both are needed. Thus the teacher will be ready for all emergencies.

JESUS IN HIS OWN COUNTRY, vers. 53–58.

53. **He departed thence.** According to Mark Jesus and his disciples sailed across the lake, where they encountered a fearful storm. They landed in the region of Gadara, where he healed the wild demoniac. He returned to Capernaum, and after several miracles there he went **into his own country**, Nazareth, twenty miles S. W. of Capernaum. Here he had been brought up from early childhood and had spent most of his life. Here was the home of his mother and family. Here he had worked many years as a carpenter and cabinet-maker, and was well known. His sisters, probably married to Nazarenes, still dwelt there (ver. 56).

WHY JESUS VISITED HIS HOME. Several months before this, in April, A. D. 28, at the beginning of his Galilean ministry, Jesus had proclaimed the Gospel in Nazareth, the home of his youth and early manhood, but had been rejected with violence, and an attempt made to murder him by casting him down a precipice (Luke 4 : 14–30). Why should he make another attempt?

(1) His heart must have yearned for his kindred and the friends of his youth. For it is recorded (John 7 : 5) that "neither did his brethren believe in him." The true Christian, like his Master, cares most anxiously for the salvation of his friends and kindred at home.

[1] Morison.

54 [z] And when he was come coming into [a] his own country [b] he taught them in their synagogue, insomuch that [c] they were astonished, and said, Whence hath this man this wisdom, and these mighty works?

55 [d] Is not this [e] the carpenter's son? is not his mother called Mā'rў? and [f] his brethren, Jāmes, and Jo'ses, Jo'seph, and Sī'mon, and Jū'das?

56 And his sisters, are they not all with us? Whence then hath this man all these things?

57 And [g] they were offended in him. But Jē'sus said unto them, [h] A prophet is not without honour, save in his own country, and in his own house.

z For vers. 54–58, see Mark 6. 1–6. Cp. Luke 4. 16–30. *a* ch. 2. 23. Luke 4. 23. *b* See ch. 4. 23. *c* See ch. 7. 28. *d* Cp. Luke 4. 22 & John 6. 42. *e* Cp. Mark 6. 3. *f* See ch. 12. 46. *g* See ch. 11. 6. *h* Luke 4. 24. John 4. 44. Cp. Jer. 11. 21 & 12. 6 & John 7. 5.

(2) Jesus would manifest his true, loving, and forgiving spirit to his townsmen who had once so violently rejected him. He laid up nothing against them. "He was rich in persevering love. He was patient not only in suffering ill, but in doing well."

(3) The circumstances would give hope that he might now succeed where he had failed before. Then he was almost unknown in that region; now he is well known and famous, attended by a band of disciples, and "the whole land is aflame with the report of his wonderful works and teaching." There was hope that all this might influence them to listen to him.

54. **He taught them in their synagogue**, their regular place of worship. Much freedom was allowed in these services, and people of note were frequently invited to speak. **Whence hath this man this wisdom, and these mighty works?** They had known Jesus all his life, they knew his circumstances, the amount of his education, his limited advantages, and knew that he had not derived them from any known source. He was merely a carpenter's son, and had made furniture or cart wheels or yokes for them; for he was himself a carpenter like his father. This fact is interesting as showing the dignity of labor, and the possibilities of those who labor. It was fitting employment for the early years of the Son of God. During this period of work he gained all his humanly obtained knowledge. He worked in obedience to his parents, and probably to help support his mother. He did all for the glory of God. The lowliest work is exalted into the highest by being done for the love of Christ, and to help and save those for whom he died. **His mother called Mary.** The absence of the name of Joseph has always been taken to show that Mary was now known apart from her husband, *i. e.*, as a widow.

55, 56. **His brethren, James, etc., . . . sisters . . . all with us.** These four were either (1) own brothers and sisters of Jesus, children of Joseph and Mary; or (2) children of Joseph by a former marriage; or (3) cousins (brothers taken in the wider sense of near *relatives*), children of Cleophas (R. V., Clopas) and Mary, sister of Mary the mother of Jesus (John 19:25, with Mark 15:40). It is impossible to decide which; but the weight of Protestant authority, on the whole, favors the idea that they were own brothers of Jesus.

James, not the apostle James, but one called "the just," and "the bishop of Jerusalem." After the dispersion of the disciples and the departure of Peter (Acts 12:17), he occupied the most prominent position in the church of Jerusalem, and stood at the head of the Jewish converts. He was the author of the Epistle of James. He was sentenced to be stoned by the Sanhedrim, A. D. 62. **Joses**, or Joseph. Nothing is known of him, or, with certainty, of the others mentioned here; though by some, including Farrar, **Judas**, or Jude, is regarded as the author of the Epistle of Jude.

57. **And they were offended in him.** Greek, they were *scandalized at him*. This is one of the few instances in which the English verb *scandalize* expresses better the sense of the Greek than any other in the language. To be *scandalized* is to be offended or shocked by some action considered wrong or outrageous.[1] The contrast between his origin, family, education, on the one hand, and, on the other, the expected king outshining Solomon in all his glory, and triumphing over Rome, was too great for their faith, and they despised and ridiculed his claims. **A prophet is not without honour**, etc. This is a very common experience. Greatness is often an invisible quality, manifested on special occasions, and hence not realized in ordinary circumstances. But Jesus' greatness was in all things to those who could see. But as we cannot easily realize a great genius or general, if clothed in beggar's rags, or in an inferior body, so the people

[1] *Century Dict.*

58 And he did not many mighty works there [i] because of their unbelief.

[i] Cp. ch. 17. 20.

of Nazareth did not recognize the Son of God in the familiar guise of a Galilean mechanic. The proverbs, "No man is a hero to his own servant," and "Distance lends enchantment to the view," express similar experiences. The people of Nazareth were not well enough acquainted with Jesus to see his real glory. They saw only the outside. The trouble was not with the prophet, but with the people who had not insight enough to see the reality. Distance often helps us to see the reality. A cloud glorified in the setting sun is but a fog when we are close by it.[1]

58. **He did not**, Mark says he could not do, **many mighty works there**, except that he healed a few sick folks (Mark), **because of their unbelief.** "May we not say that among the conditions to which Christ subjected himself on earth was this, that he put forth his powers of healing only as a means of spiritual development, and only, therefore, to those in whom at least a germ of faith was awakened; and that, this being wanting, he could not heal without violating the fundamental principle of his life? And may we not say further, that this essential principle still holds good; that, by its very nature, his salvation can be made available only to such as are willing in humble trust to accept it; and that, where the trust is wanting, it is still true that Christ cannot do the mighty work of salvation?"[2] To do mighty works for an unbelieving people would indorse and encourage unbelief. Why should men seek faith in God and the life which flows from it, if they can obtain all they want without it?[3]

CHAPTER 14.

Section xiv., including chapters 14, 15, and 16: 1–12, continues the account of the Galilean ministry, recording various important truths, without chronological order or logical connection, but in the natural order as suggested by circumstances; like the various colors in a painting, all necessary to complete the picture of the Galilean ministry.

SECTION XIV.—VARIOUS ASPECTS OF THE GALILEAN MINISTRY.

1. THE MARTYRDOM OF JOHN THE BAPTIST, vers. 1–12.
2. FEEDING THE FIVE THOUSAND, vers. 13–21.
3. THE STORM AT SEA. PETER'S EXPERIENCE AND LESSON IN FAITH, vers. 22–33.
4. HEALING GREAT NUMBERS AT GENNESARET, vers. 34–36.

Time.

Spring of A. D. 29.
The third year of Jesus' ministry.

Place.

Chiefly in the vicinity of the Sea of Galilee.

1 [j] At that (time, season) [k] Hĕr'od the tetrarch heard (of the fame of, the report concerning) Jē'sus,

[j] For ver. 1–12, see Mark 6. 14–29 & Luke 9. 7–9. [k] Luke 3. 1. Acts 13. 1.

I. THE MARTYRDOM OF JOHN THE BAPTIST, vers. 1–12.

TIME. March, A. D. 29, after a year in prison.

PLACE. John was imprisoned and put to death at Macherus, a strong fortress and castle on the borders of Arabia, nine miles east of the northern end of the Dead Sea. The feast held by Herod at which Herodias demanded the head of John the Baptist was probably held in this castle.

PARALLELS. Mark 6: 14–29; Luke 9: 7–9.

HEROD'S TROUBLED CONSCIENCE. 1. **At that time.** That period of Jesus' ministry while the twelve were on their Galilean mission, begun in chap. 10: 1, 5, and continuing all winter.

[1] Compare Cassius' feelings toward Cæsar, in Shakespeare's *Julius Cæsar*, and Consuelo's advice to Anzoleto to leave Venice, because "this is a bad place for one who has been seen running about in rags."

[2] Lyman Abbott.

[3] Compare Ruskin's *Modern Painters*, vol. v., "Peace," "No pay is receivable by any true man; but power is receivable by him in the faith and love you give him," etc.

2 And said unto his servants, This is Jŏhn the Băp'tist; he is risen from the dead; and therefore [m] mighty works do shew forth themselves / do these powers work in him.

3 ¶ For [n] Hĕr'od had laid hold on Jŏhn, and bound him, and [o] put him in prison for He-ro'di-as' sake, / the sake of He-ro'di-as, his brother Phĭl'ĭp's wife.

l ch. 16. 14. *m* ch. 13. 54 (mg.). *n* Luke 3. 19, 20. *o* ch. 11. 2. John 3. 24.

About this time they returned to report to Jesus (Matt. 14: 12, 13, compared with Mark 6: 30–32). **Herod the tetrarch.** Herod Antipas, son of Herod the Great (who slew the Bethlehem innocents), and heir to one fourth of his kingdom, — Galilee and Perea. Hence he is called *tetrarch*, which means "ruler of a fourth part." "Of all the contemptible wretches of Scripture — not excluding Judas, who is in some ways a great problem — Herod Antipas is the greatest, — a little, petty, disgraceful Nero, a King John of England, a bundle of petty vices." [1] **Heard of the fame of Jesus.** R. V., "Heard the report concerning Jesus." His marvellous works and teachings had so penetrated and stirred the whole people that the news reached the ears of the king.

2. **Said unto his servants.** Officers, who were discussing as to who Jesus was, some saying that he was Elijah, others that he was a prophet like the prophets of old; but Herod, impelled by a guilty conscience, feared that it was John the Baptist, whom he had murdered, risen from the dead. "If we mistake not, that dissevered head was rarely thenceforth absent from Herod's haunted imagination from that day forward till he lay upon his dying bed." [2]

Therefore mighty works do shew forth themselves in him. Better as R. V., "do these powers work in him." He thought that John had brought back with him those larger powers, those diviner gifts, which the spirit receives when it enters upon the heavenly life; and the prophet could now exert those powers in sterner reproof and more terrible faithfulness. The memory of his crime doubtless haunted him, as Banquo's ghost haunted Macbeth with its silent horror: —

"My conscience hath a thousand several tongues,
And every tongue brings in a several tale,
And every tale condemns me for a villain." [3]

Compare Lady Macbeth talking in her sleep: "All the perfumes of Arabia cannot sweeten this little hand." Shakespeare represents Richard III. as seeing a vision in his sleep just before his last battle, in which appear the ghosts of those whom he had murdered. One by one they come, rehearse the crimes he had committed upon them, and cry, "Despair, and die. Let me sit heavy on thy soul to-morrow."

"Conscience is a thousand swords."

Nero was haunted by the ghost of his mother, whom he had put to death. Caligula suffered from want of sleep, being haunted by the faces of his murdered victims. Every one knows Victor Hugo's beautiful poem *La Conscience*, the story of Cain fleeing away before the eye of God. The Furies of classic mythology "are commonly represented as brandishing each a torch in one hand and a scourge of snakes in the other." [4]

Contrast Herod living amid such terrors of conscience, and John the martyr in heaven, wearing a crown of victory, clothed in white raiment, made white in the blood of the Lamb, and amid all that is described in Rev. 7: 13–17.

JOHN'S COURAGEOUS REPROOF OF THE KING. Probably at Tiberias, on the Sea of Galilee.

3. **For Herod had laid hold on,** arrested, **John . . . and put him in prison,** in a dungeon of his castle Macherus, according to Josephus.[5] **For Herodias' sake, his brother Philip's wife.** The crime of the guilty pair was one of manifold malignity and double dyed turpitude. (1) Herod was married to the daughter of Aretas, an Arabian king, but abandoned her for the sake of Herodias. (2) Herodias was the wife of her uncle Philip, an older brother of Herod Antipas, but she deserted him and eloped with the younger brother. (3) Herod was guilty of the basest treachery to his brother. For it was while visiting his brother Philip in Rome that he became acquainted with Herodias, and, as a guest, he plotted against the honor and happiness of one who was both brother and host. (4) Herodias was "an able, ambitious, unprincipled, but bewitching and ensnaring woman."

[1] John Watson, D. D. (Ian Maclaren).

[2] Canon Farrar.

[3] Shakespeare.

[4] Compare Browning's *Poems*, "Pippa Passes." "I know no poem since *Macbeth* that so portrays the agony of an awakened conscience." — Pres. Stanley Hall's *A Study of Fears*. Hawthorne's *Mosses from an Old Manse*, vol. ii., "The Bosom Serpent," where the chief character continually exclaims, "It gnaws me." Hood's *Poems*, "Dream of Eugene Aram." Roman poet Persius, *Satires*, about thirty years after the murder of John, uses this experience of Herod to show how superstitious fear mars all the pleasures of life. "The Furies" in *Classical Dictionary*. An interesting parallel to Herod and his course here is given in Rawlinson's *Herodotus*, vol. iv. pp. 456–9, concerning Xerxes. On the power of conscience, see Joseph Cook's *Monday Lectures* (vol. iv.), "Conscience," where are brought together illustrations from a wide range of literature.

[5] *Ant.* xviii. 5: 2.

4 For Jŏhn said unto him, [p] It is not lawful for thee to have her.

5 And when he would have put him to death, he [q] feared the multitude, because they counted him as [r] a prophet.

6 But when Hĕr'od's [s] birthday (was kept, came,) the daughter of Hĕ-rō'dĭ-as danced before them, (in the midst,) and pleased Hĕr'od.

p Lev. 18. 16 & 20. 21. *q* ch. 21. 26. Cp. ch. 21. 46. *r* See ch. 11. 9. *s* Gen. 40. 20.

When she married Philip, she probably expected that, as the oldest son of Herod the Great, he would be heir of the whole kingdom. But in this she was disappointed. Her husband was a poor man, disinherited by his father, without rank or place at court; while his younger brother, Antipas, was rich and a king. (5) All these crimes were not the mere fruit of a sudden, unexpected storm of temptation; but were made possible by the bad characters and innumerable lesser wickednesses which prepared the way. The tree the storm blows over has almost always rottenness at the root, without which the storm would have raged in vain. "In Cleopatra, the paramour of Mark Antony, Shakespeare has depicted the type of Herodias in all its features of mingled attractiveness and abandonment." [1] Herodias was the Lady Macbeth of Shakespeare. She was the Jezebel who ruled Ahab, as she now ruled Herod, and who sought the life of the prophet Elijah, as now she sought the life of Elijah's successor.

4. **For John said.** Imperfect, implying that he said it repeatedly. Herod probably invited John to preach before the court. **It is not lawful for thee,** etc. (1) Because he had put away his lawful wife. (2) He had persuaded Herodias to forsake her husband, Herod's brother Philip, for the sake of rank and wealth. (3) He had married Herodias, his niece and sister-in-law, contrary to the law (Lev. 18: 12–14).

Why John reproved Herod. (1) Herod's course was bringing untold evils upon the people. Aretas, indignant at the affront Herod had put upon him, had declared war; and at the very time of John's reproof, preparations for war were actively going on. John sought to stop the flood of horrors this would roll upon the people. (2) John could not effectively denounce the sins of the people if he let sins in high places go unreproved. (3) Unrebuked crime in high places teaches, indorses, and propagates crime among the people.[2]

5. **And when he would have put him to death.** Urged on by Herodias, the bitter enemy of John (Mark). She must stop his speaking, and death alone could do it. The reason was that if Herod had yielded to John, she was a lost and ruined woman, dethroned, abandoned, disgraced, with nowhere to go. Either John must die, or her whole life was lost. She was like Lady Macbeth, continually urging her husband on, — "Infirm of purpose, give me the daggers." She was his evil genius, but she could not succeed as yet in persuading Herod to give the necessary orders. He "let 'I dare not' wait upon 'I would.'" **He feared the multitude,** who might rise up in revolt, or report him to the emperor, if he killed a prophet. He was even then on the verge of war, and was likely to bring untold evils on the nation. He feared John too (Mark), who with his mighty eloquence could arouse the people to revolt,[3] as Queen Mary feared John Knox, and Ahab feared Elijah though urged on by Jezebel.

There is nothing so cowardly as a guilty conscience, or so to be feared by evil-doers as a holy man who voices the truth of God. To kill John would be fighting against all the higher unknown powers. Herod had John brought to him and "heard him gladly." His soul was perplexed.

Thus John was kept in the dungeon for a year. It was during this year that he sent a delegation of his disciples to Jesus to inquire if he really were the Messiah.

The Martyrdom of John. The scene now changes to Macherus.

6. **When Herod's birthday was kept.** Or came, and was kept with a great banquet to which the nobles and military officers (Mark) were invited. "It is evening, and the castle-palace is brilliantly lighted up. The sound of music and shouts of revelry fall into the deep dungeon where waits the prisoner of Christ." **The daughter of Herodias,** by her former husband. Her name was Salome, and she afterwards married her uncle, Herod Philip II., tetrarch of Ituræa. **Danced before them,** or "in the midst," as R. V. She had been sent by her mother to gain an opportunity for killing John. It was a shrewd

[1] Prof. Stalker.

[2] Compare Bishop Latimer preaching before Henry VIII. Foster's *Cyclopedia of Illustrations*, 938. Luther before the Diet of Worms. Socrates and the Athenians: Plato's *Apology*, p. 23.

[3] Compare Mark Antony's speech, —

"Would ruffle up your spirits, and put a tongue
In every wound of Cæsar, that should move
The stones of Rome to rise and mutiny."

7 Whereupon he promised with an oath to give her whatsoever she would should ask.
8 And she, being before instructed of put forward by her mother, said, saith, Give me here John Bap'tist's head in a charger the head of a charger.
John the Bap'tist.

scheme to take advantage of Herod's half intoxicated condition.

The dancing was usually with the accompaniment of tambourines or bells attached to the fingers, and with songs. "Dancing women were abundant, and in such banquets it was common for them to appear, transparently robed, and execute voluptuous and impurely suggestive dances." The princess was probably young, beautiful, graceful, and fascinating; Herod and his companions were intoxicated with "the perilous witchery of her beauty." "No reputable maiden could ever have done what she did. The dancing girls in the Orient are exceedingly popular as entertainers, but their profession is one the practice of which, it is not too much to say, is ruinous alike to themselves and to the spectators."[1] **And pleased Herod.** The scheme succeeded. They were "fascinated by the novel spectacle of a high-born and charming girl going through the voluptuous movements of an Oriental dance."

7. Promised . . . to give her whatsoever she would ask. Even to half of his kingdom (Mark); a wild and reckless promise that could have been made only by one who had lost his wits by drunkenness.

A TEMPERANCE LESSON can be taught from this rash promise. Wine and strong drink distort the judgment long before they produce drunkenness. A drinking man is not a safe business man.

"O God, that men should put an enemy in their mouths, to steal away their brains!"

"Herod's foolish offer of whatever she might ask is precisely what one acquainted with the circumstances would expect. On such occasions men vie with each other in the value of their gifts to the dancer. Many a man finds himself in straitened circumstances long after taking part in a similar entertainment. A writer on the far East gives this curious fact: 'The dancer, Laal-Koner, gained such an ascendency over the Mogul emperor Ma'az ed-Din, that he made her joint-governess of the empire with himself.'"[1]

A KINGDOM FOR A DANCE. Herod was willing to give away half of his kingdom for the sight of an immoral dance. Poor fool! But how many in our day give away the whole kingdom of their souls, with health and hope, prosperity, peace, and goodness, — yea, the whole kingdom of heaven, — for the paltry price of a glass of wine; the pleasure of the table; the gratification of passion or pride; the acquisition of a little money! The race of Esau still lives, who sell their birthright for a mess of pottage.

8. And she, being before instructed of her mother. She went to her mother and said, What

The Charger.

shall I ask? (Mark). Which of all the beautiful things offered her, — "palaces, jewels, gorgeous apparel, — all that a girl's heart could desire."

Her mother replied in words Salome repeated to the king. **Give me here John Baptist's head in a charger**, a large platter, which was *charged*, *i. e.*, loaded with meats to be brought to the banquet. By what argument could she persuade her daughter to ask such a gift instead of riches, palaces, and jewels? Professor Stalker puts these words in the mother's mouth: "Little fool, you know not what you ask: what would all these things be to you and me, unqueened and outcast, as we may be any day if John the Baptist lives." Ask that, and you can have the others; without that, all other things will be apples of Sodom.

Compare the two views of her feelings (1) by Charles Lamb: —

"A cruel triumph, wicked pride,
That for your sport a saint had died."

(2) In a poem by Lucy Hooper: —

"Away with lute and harp, . . . and dance!
. . . O fearful mother! I have brought to thee
The silent dead, with his rebuking glance,
And the crushed heart of one to whom are given
Wild dreams of judgment and offended heaven."

[1] Rev. W. Ewing, a missionary in Syria.

9 And the king was sorry: nevertheless for the oath's sake, grieved; but for the sake of his oaths, and of them which sat with him at meat with him, he commanded it to be given; her.

10 And he sent, and beheaded John in the prison.

11 And his head was brought in a charger, and given to the damsel: and she brought it to her mother.

12 And *t* his disciples came, and took up the body, corpse, and buried it, him; and they went and told Jē'sus.

t See ch. 9. 14.

9. **And the king was sorry.** Not penitent, but troubled and anxious. He had expected some entirely different request. There were danger and a troubled conscience in the gift. **Nevertheless for the oath's sake.** It should be *oaths'*, not *oath's*, which is a printer's or editor's error. The word is plural in the original (see R. V.). Herod had placed himself in a dilemma to make a choice of two evils, — to break a rash, wicked oath, or to commit murder. **And them which sat with him.** Pride, and fear of immediate public opinion, turned the scale, for John would have few friends in that assembly. Probably if the oaths had been secret, he would not have hesitated to break them. **He commanded it to be given her.** The wily Herodias had gained her desire, which for a year had been refused by Herod.

10. **Beheaded John in the prison.** If the feast was at Macherus, the prison was in one of the dungeons of the castle, and the request was answered in a very brief time.

11. **His head was brought in a charger,** as meats to a feast. "The sight of the Baptist's head would be a feast to Herodias. She seemed to triumph after a year's waiting." **She brought it to her mother.** She had sacrificed much to please her mother. But that mother did not gain her end. John was silenced, but conscience and the voice of God were not silenced. The stain of blood could never be washed away, nor "all the perfumes of Arabia sweeten" the guilty soul. The ghost of John was worse than Banquo's ghost to Macbeth. She died in exile.

12. **And went and told Jesus,** who was most interested, as the one of whom John was the forerunner and friend. They doubtless afterwards became the disciples of Jesus.

Go and tell Jesus. So should we go and tell Jesus all our troubles and works. (1) It will comfort us to have his sympathy. (2) It will make us feel more clearly that we are workers together with him. (3) It will keep us from those things we are unwilling to tell. (4) It will bring us into more intimate friendship and acquaintance with Jesus. (5) He will give us the guidance and light we need.

Herod and Herodias: Their Apparent Success, but Real Failure. They seemed to succeed, but their life was a failure. John seemed to fail, but his life was a marvellous success. They had riches and honor. They had all that luxury could give. They fared sumptuously every day, but their lives were a failure, for there were bitter ingredients in their cup of life which destroyed its fascinations. The tempter whispered, —

> "Be mine and Sin's for one short hour, and then
> Be all thy life the happiest man of men."

But they found it true, —

> "Ah, brother, have you not full oft
> Found, even as the Roman did,
> That in Life's most delicious draught,
> *Surgit amari aliquid* ?"
> (Something bitter comes unbid).

(1.) From this moment began for Herod Antipas a series of annoyances and misfortunes, which only culminated in his death years afterwards in discrowned royalty and unpitied exile. And Herodias suffered all with him. "Our pleasant vices," it has well been said, "are made the instruments to punish us."

(2.) Their success was brief as well as troubled. Herodias proved the curse and ruin of Herod. The people attributed all his later misfortunes to his murder of John the Baptist. On account of her there was a war with Aretas of Arabia, the father of Herod's divorced wife, in which he was worsted. In A. D. 38, less than ten years after the murder of John, "Herodias' ambition, against her husband's better judgment, led him to Rome to solicit the title of king, lately given to Agrippa (Acts 12 : 1), the brother of Herodias. Antipas not only failed, but was deprived of his dominions, and banished to Lyons, in Gaul, where he died. The apparent faithfulness of the woman to her husband in his fallen fortunes seems the only redeeming point in her history."[1] Salome married her uncle, Herod Philip. "A tradition or legend," says Ellicott, "relates that Salome's death was retributive in its outward form. She fell upon the ice, and in the fall her head was severed from the body."

[1] Edersheim.

13 ¶ When / Now when Jē'ṣus heard *of it*, *u* he departed / withdrew from thence by ship into / in a boat, to a desert place apart: and when the people had / multitudes heard *thereof*, they followed him on foot out of / from the cities.

u For vers. 13–21, see Mark 6. 32–44 & Luke 9. 10–17 & John 6. 1–13. Cp. ch. 15. 32–38 & 16. 9 & Mark 8. 2–9.

(3.) All through his seeming prosperity Herod's conscience was powerful enough to trouble him, but not enough to restrain him from sin. No regrets that, like Herod's, are weaker than the fear of man, no washing of hands like Pilate's, no tears like Esau's, can cleanse the guilty soul.

(4.) Herod is pilloried in history. All ages see this crime like Cain's mark on his forehead. He has an immortality of infamy.

THE SEEMING FAILURE AND REAL SUCCESS OF JOHN. John's life was short. His work lasted less than two years.

(1.) John's first success lay in the fact that he preserved his manhood and his character untarnished amid great temptations. He was a hero. He was gold tried in the fire. No man's life is a failure who is himself a moral success and is a victor on the battlefield of the heart. "Shakespeare beats triumphal marches, not for successful persons alone, but also for the conquered and the slain."[1]

(2.) John finished the work that was given him to do. His life was a completed whole. Had he lived longer, he would have marred the perfection of this work. After the Messiah had come and was established, the work of the forerunner was ended.

"That life is long which answers life's great end."[2]

"We live in deeds, not years; in thoughts, not breaths;
In feelings, not in figures on a dial. He most lives
Who thinks most, feels the noblest, acts the best."[3]

"He liveth long who liveth well;
All other life is short and vain;
He liveth longest who can tell
Of living most for heavenly gain."

(3.) John the Baptist has part in all the triumphs of Christianity for which he prepared the way. He still prepares the way for the coming of Christ, for repentance must ever precede the full redemption of the soul.

(4.) John lives through all ages by his example. He holds up before all men an ideal of heroism, courage, faithfulness to duty. He is a perpetual inspiration.

"Oh, may I join the choir invisible
Of those immortal dead who live again
In minds made better by their presence; live
In pulses stirred to generosity,
In deeds of daring rectitude, in scorn
For miserable aims that end with self,
In thoughts sublime that pierce the night like stars,
And with their mild persistence urge man's search
To vaster issues."[4]

(5.) John is one of the great cloud of witnesses (Heb. 12 : 1; Luke 15 : 10), who are watching the progress of the kingdom of God among men.

(6.) In heaven he wears the victor's crown, and dwells forever in the joy of his Lord, eating of "the tree of life which is in the midst of the paradise of God," "a pillar in the temple of my God," having "the morning star" and "the new name."

"If thou wilt be a hero, and wilt strive
To help thy fellow and exalt thyself,
Thy feet, at last, shall stand on jasper floors;
Thy heart, at last, shall seem a thousand hearts —
Each single heart with myriad raptures filled —
While thou shalt sit with princes and with kings,
Rich in the jewel of a ransomed soul."

II. FEEDING THE FIVE THOUSAND, vers. 13–21.

TIME. Spring of A. D. 28, soon after the death of John the Baptist.

PLACE. The plain of Butaiha, belonging to Bethsaida (Luke 9: 10), a "desert;" *i. e.*, an uncultivated, uninhabited place, a short distance southeast of Bethsaida, on the northeast shore of the Sea of Galilee.

PARALLELS. Mark 6: 30–44; Luke 9: 10–17; John 6: 1–15.

SCENE I. JESUS WITH HIS DISCIPLES RETIRES TO AN UNINHABITED REGION.

13. **When Jesus heard of it.** The death of John the Baptist, through John's disciples, who, according to the previous verse, went to Galilee and told Jesus. **He departed thence.** From Galilee, and probably Capernaum, where Jesus made his home, so far as he had one.

By ship, or boat, probably a fishing boat. **Into a desert place apart.** The wild pasture lands and uninhabited country southeast of Bethsaida. They sailed in a northeast direction out of Herod Antipas' dominions into those of Philip.

Two reasons are given for leaving Galilee. FIRST. The martyrdom of John. The excitement on account of Herod's murder of the prophet might end in a political revolt (Josephus, *Ant.* xviii. 5: 2), which was entirely contrary to the plans and principles of Jesus in inaugurating his kingdom, and yet he might be involved in it,

[1] Dowden on Shakespeare.
[2] Young, *Night Thoughts.*
[3] Bailey.
[4] George Eliot.

14 And [Jesus went / he came] forth, and [v] saw a great multitude, and [was moved with compassion / he had compassion] toward them, and [he] healed their sick.

[v] Cp. ch. 9. 36.

or seem to be, if he remained. The desire shown, when he fed the five thousand, to make him a king may have been one expression of this tendency to revolution. Perhaps, also, as Andrew suggests, "he himself desired a few hours for solitary communion with God, for the refreshment of his own spirit, agitated by the death of John, whom he mourned as a faithful friend, and in whose untimely and violent end he saw the sign and foreshadowing of his own approaching death."

SECOND. From Mark 6: 30, 31, we learn the additional reason, that the disciples had just returned from their missionary tour in Galilee, and needed rest; which could not be easily obtained at this time amid the crowds. So many came that they had not time even to eat. They needed this retirement (1) for physical rest; (2) for instruction in review of their labors; (3) for communion with God; (4) for that wider and truer view of their work which comes from seeing it as a whole, as a landscape is seen from a mountain top.

SCENE II. THE GATHERING MULTITUDES. The multitudes followed him. Probably early in the morning. Some one had noticed the direction in which Jesus went, and they could watch the course of his boat nearly all the way. They flocked from all directions, some over the sea, some by the land route along the northern shore, the numbers increasing from every city and village on the way; for at this time the western and northern shores were populous with towns and villas.

Two reasons are given in John's account for the greatness of the crowd.

FIRST. It was just the Passover at Jerusalem, which every man among the Jews was required to attend. The great roads to Jerusalem passed near the head of the lake. These were thronged with pilgrims going up to the Passover, who thus had leisure to stop and see and hear the great prophet. Pilgrims from every part of Galilee were also going up to Jerusalem. They had broken away from their homes and business, and had time to go out of their way to see and hear him whose fame had gone out over the whole region.

SECOND. They were attracted by the miracles which Jesus did. The attraction was not merely curiosity and wonder, but also a semi-consciousness that these showed that Jesus was the prophet who could help them in many needs of their souls. Doubtless some had sicknesses or pains of their own and others had friends who were sick. "The wonderful stream of pilgrims which, in our day, converges each year on Mecca, or towards the more famous temples of India, gives us some idea of the vast movements of population which marked similar religious anniversaries in antiquity."[1]

SCENE III. JESUS BUSY HELPING THE MULTITUDES.

FIRST. Jesus gathered his disciples around him in some nook on the mountain side overlooking the plain, and there sat, the posture of a teacher, with his disciples (John 6: 3), probably in the earlier part of the day. They had just returned from their tour around Galilee (Mark), and would wish to talk over their plans, their successes, their mistakes, and receive the instruction they would soon need as to the true way of preaching the Gospel to the world, and as to the Gospel they should preach. The death of John the Baptist would also be a fruitful theme, and many a wise word on duty, faithfulness, and devotion, and the martyr's crown that was within the vision of their own future, would be spoken. Thus were the disciples being trained for their future work for the multitudes. It is quite probable that Jesus may have gathered his disciples again around him in the afternoon at the close of his other labors, just before he fed the multitude.

SECOND. 14. Jesus went forth. From his retreat, where he was gaining his needed rest, and welcomed the multitudes (Luke 9: 11, R. V.), and taught them many things concerning the kingdom of God (Mark and Luke).

THIRD. He saw a great multitude, and was moved with compassion toward them, for they were like sheep without a shepherd (Mark). The fields were white to the harvest. Their bodily hunger and need of healing were but a type of their deeper hunger for spiritual food and the more deadly disease of sin. The hungering multitudes were a picture of the great world, restless and hungry. They need eternal life; they need to have their souls nourished and strengthened; they need to be satisfied with love, and forgiveness, and hope, and faith, and courage; they are dying for want of the bread of life, but do not realize what it is they need. Jesus has compassion for all the people of the world. His soul longs to help them. He desires to be their Shepherd, and he has come from afar, at great cost, to furnish them with healing and with the bread of life.

[1] Geikie. Zola's *Lourdes* gives a striking picture of crowds pouring out of the cities on the way for healing.

15 ¶ And when it even was evening, his come, the disciples came to him, saying, This is a desert place, The place is desert, and the time is now already past; *w* send the multitude multitudes away, that they may go into the villages, and buy themselves victuals. food.

16 But Jē'sus said unto them, They have no need not depart; to go away; *x* give ye them to eat.

17 And they say unto him, We have here but five loaves, and two fishes.

18 He And he said, Bring them hither to me.

19 And he commanded the multitude multitudes to sit down on the grass, and he took the five loaves, and the two fishes, and *y* looking up to heaven, he blessed, and brake, and gave the loaves to his the disciples, and the disciples to the multitude. multitudes.

w ver. 22. Cp. ch. 15. 23. *x* Cp. 2 Kin. 4. 42–44. *y* Mark 7. 34. John 11. 41 & 17. 1. *z* ch. 26. 16. 1 Sam. 9. 13. Mark 8. 7 & 14. 22. Luke 24. 30. Cp. 1 Cor. 14. 16.

FOURTH. **And he healed their sick.** Thus giving weight and authority to his instructions, and showing God's lovingkindness, and illustrating what the Gospel will do for soul and body.

SCENE IV. THE COMMITTEE OF WAYS AND MEANS.

15. **When it was evening,** "when the day began to wear away" (Luke). **His disciples came to him.** By combining all the accounts the conversation at this time would be about as follows: —

Jesus (speaking to Philip, whose home was at Bethsaida, and who therefore was acquainted with the region and the people). "Whence shall we buy bread, that these may eat?" (John).

Philip. "Two hundred pennyworth (thirty-four dollars' worth) of bread is not sufficient for them, that every one of them may take a little" (John).

The Apostles. **Send the multitude away, that they may go into the villages and country round about, and lodge** (Luke), **and buy themselves victuals.**

Jesus (ver. 16). **They need not depart; give ye them to eat.**

The Apostles. "Shall we go and buy two hundred pennyworth of bread and give them to eat?" (Mark).

Jesus. "How many loaves have ye? Go and see" (Mark).

Andrew (returning from the search, and speaking for the apostles). We have a lad here (John) who has (ver. 17) **five loaves and two fishes**; but what are these among so many? (John).

Matthew uses the common word for *fishes*; but John uses another word "(*opsária*), a diminutive, which properly means what was eaten along with the bread, and specially refers to the small and generally dried or pickled fish eaten with bread, like our 'sardines,' or the 'caviar' of Russia, the pickled herrings of Holland and Germany. Millions were caught in the lake. We know that both the salting and pickling of them was a special industry among its fishermen."[1] The *loaves* were round flat cakes, like large crackers, and were made of barley.

SCENE V. THE FIVE THOUSAND FED.

19. **And he commanded the multitude to sit down on the grass.** *To recline*, according to the customary posture of eating. The grass would be luxuriant at this time of the year. Mark says they sat by hundreds and fifties. "The Jewish dining-room was arranged like the Roman: three tables forming three sides of a square, with divans or couches following the outside line of the tables. The open end of the square admitted the servants who waited at table. This explains the arrangement of the multitude here described by Mark. The people sat down, literally, *in table-companies*, arranged like guests at table; some companies of a hundred and some of fifty, in squares or oblongs open at one end, so that the disciples could pass along the inside and distribute the loaves." "The red, blue, and yellow clothing of the poorest Orientals makes an Eastern crowd full of color; a fact which would appeal to Peter's eye, suggesting the appearance of flower-beds in a garden."[2] Mark tells us they sat *in ranks*, which literally means *garden plots*, or flower beds. Morison's description of the arrangement differs from that of Prof. Vincent and Meyer, in that he makes the view to be a hundred fifties when seen from one direction, and fifty of these hundreds when viewed in another direction, each hundred constituting a distinct party or group.

And looking up to heaven, as the source of all good. **He blessed.** The Greek word means "praised, celebrated with praise." The meaning differs but little from the word used by John, "he gave thanks."[3] The act was natural and simple enough, the "saying grace" of the head of a Jewish household as he gathered his family around him. **And brake.**

"'T was seedtime when he blessed the bread,
'T was harvest when he brake."

[1] Edersheim. [2] Prof. Vincent, *Word Studies*. [3] Thayer, *Greek-English N. T. Lexicon*.

20 And they did all eat, and were filled: and they took up [of the fragments that] [that which remained] over of the broken pieces, twelve baskets full.

21 And they that [had eaten] [did eat] were about five thousand men, beside women and children.

Gave the loaves to his disciples, as a matter of convenience, and as an object lesson both to them and to the people. The divine gifts were conveyed through human instrumentality, as in the case of spiritual food. "Doubtless the faith of the disciples was severely tried when they were required to advance each man to his separate hundred with his morsel of bread."

20. **They did all eat.** No one, not even the children, went away hungry, but each had all he wanted. As always with the Gospel there was

> "'Enough for each, enough for all,
> Enough forevermore.'"

They took up of the fragments that remained. The broken pieces, as Jesus had commanded them, so that nothing be wasted (John). The gathering of the fragments was an object lesson of precious truth, and completed the proof of the miracle, for more remained than there was to begin with.

Twelve baskets full. "They were small hand-baskets specially provided for the Jews to carry Levitically clean food while travelling in Samaria or other heathen districts."[1] "They were made of rushes, reeds, twigs, or ropes."[2] "Wicker baskets." "Their sizes were probably variable, but the word is used for a Bœotian measure of capacity equal to two gallons."[3]

21. **Five thousand.** The arrangement made it easy to know the number.

PRACTICAL SUGGESTIONS. (1) Take note of the example of Jesus in blessing the bread before eating. Food mingled with gratitude and love is doubly blessed.

(2) The hope of the world's salvation is in the wonderful power of God in multiplying the littles; the numbers, the wealth, the power of Christians are enough for the salvation of the world, if they will distribute what God gives them, and if His blessing goes with it.

(3) Jesus conferred a great privilege on the disciples in making them the instruments of conferring his bounty. It is more blessed to give than to receive. Jesus could have rained manna from heaven, or summoned angels to help, but he gave this privilege to his disciples.

The fountain that gives what it receives is fresh, and clear, and beautiful. The bog that receives and does not give is malarious, foul, reptile-haunted. So the oil in the widow's cruse increased by pouring out. And the grain increases not in the storehouse, but when scattered on the ground. "This is the arithmetic of the kingdom. Earthly arithmetic says, 'Give, and want.' Heavenly arithmetic says, 'Give, and grow rich.'"[4]

(4) Again and again in their future work would arise the question, "What are these among so many?" These few disciples, these few instrumentalities, these weak powers, these few principles of truth, — what are these among the millions of people to be brought into the kingdom, and the mighty powers of opposition to be overthrown? Jesus by his miracle showed them that in him lay the power that could multiply these feeble instrumentalities. It was a miracle of instruction in cheer and hope and faith, a miracle of promise of victory. We need not be troubled by our small talents, or meagre means, or few opportunities, if we consecrate them to Christ and his service. Most of the greatest results in the world have begun thus.

(5) "This is a charming lesson for small boys. Notice that Christ almost always had men in partnership with him in working his greatest miracles. How interested this boy must have been, not to have eaten that lunch of his, while even men were getting hungry! — for boys are always hungry."[5] This young boy was a small Christian Endeavor Society, perhaps one of the Juniors.

(6) Our duties and our privileges are not measured by what we can do of ourselves, but by what God is willing to do through us. We cannot turn the machinery of the factory, but we can let the water on to the wheel. We cannot push the steamship across the ocean, but we can let on the steam for the engine to do it.

(7) Science as well as religion says, "Gather up the fragments." Many of the most useful things are now made out of what was once thrown away. The former refuse in making kerosene oil is now worth more than the oil. The waste of logs is made into paper. We extract beautiful colors from the dung-heap, and delicious perfumes and essences from offal of the streets. "The wastes of a cotton mill founded the fortune of one of the greatest families in England. Peter Cooper used to say that he built the Cooper In-

[1] Prof. Vincent.
[2] Prof. Davis, *Bib. Dic.*
[3] Prof. A. Macalister, in *Scribner's New Dictionary of the Bible.*
[4] A. F. Schauffler, D. D.
[5] Bishop H. W. Warren.

22 ¶ [a] And straightway Jesus (he) [b] constrained his (the) disciples to get (enter) into a ship, (the boat,) and to go before him unto the other side, while (till) he sent (should send) the multitudes away.

a For vers. 22–33, see Mark 6. 45–51 & John 6. 15–21. *b* Cp. ch. 8. 18.

stitute by picking up the refuse that the butcher shops threw aside."

Let nothing be wasted or lost in God's work. Using well or wasting the fragments of time, of opportunity, the nooks and corners of life, makes all the difference between success and failure.

This is especially true of spiritual work. Often the best results are gained from the use of fragments of our business or daily life, the by-products of living.

(8) "The twelve baskets were an apt symbol of that love which exhausts not itself by loving, but after all its outgoings upon others abides itself far richer than it would have done but for these, of the multiplying which there ever is in a true dispensing."[1]

(9) Jesus is the Bread of Life. The next day, Jesus makes an explanation of the truths taught by this miracle, showing that he himself was the true bread from heaven, and was to their souls what this miracle of the loaves was to their bodies. The soul needs food as really as the body. Every faculty of the soul needs its own food, that will strengthen and sustain its life, develop its powers, make it grow into the fulness and perfection of its nature. Whatever enlarges the soul, builds up the character, increases faith, hope, love, knowledge, and all the virtues, makes the conscience more tender and true, cultures the will, perfects the judgment, and enables the soul to work out a pure and holy life, and fits it for heaven, — whatever does these things is the bread of life.

There is also the inspiring function of food. It generates heat, vigor, vitality, energy. So Jesus strengthens and inspires all the activities by his personal power over our souls. We have hints of this in the power certain people have over us to inspire, awaken, and uplift us. Their presence is an atmosphere of health. We want to live better when we are near them. So with Jesus: when we draw near to him in love, we feel

> "His being working in my own,
> The footsteps of his life in mine."

We find in looking over our life that the things which have ministered most to our soul's growth come from the personal power of soul over soul, manifested (1) by the character, (2) by a mysterious, undefined influence, (3) by single acts of heroic or saintly virtue, (4) by books recording these characters or deeds. All these personal influences are exerted in the highest degree by Jesus over those who love, trust, and obey him.

III. THE STORM AT SEA. PETER'S EXPERIENCE, vers. 22–33.

Time. The night following the miracle of the loaves.

Parallels. Mark 6 : 45–52; John 6 : 14–21.

Christ stilling a Tempest. Matt. 8 : 23–27; Mark 4 : 35–41; Luke 8 : 22–25.

I. Jesus in Prayer on the Mountain Side. The Disciples at Sea on the way Home.

22. **And straightway**, immediately after he had fed the multitudes. **Jesus constrained.** Urged, compelled by his authority and influence, contrary to their own natural desires. The disciples were reluctant to go away and leave their teacher alone in this desert place at night. It seemed like disloyalty and desertion. John (6 : 15) gives a reason for this urgency, in the fact that the people in their excitement tried to make Jesus a king. **To get into a ship.** Better as in R. V., to enter *the* boat, the one they had come in; not very large, for it could be propelled by oars. **And to go before him unto the other side.** "To Bethsaida" (Mark); "toward Capernaum" (John); this being the ultimate point to be reached. Bethsaida would be a safe and quiet harbor where they could rest till Jesus came to them in the morning.

"We infer that he sent them to Bethsaida, which was not far off (Luke 9 : 10), at the mouth of the Jordan, directing them to await him there, so that they would cross together to Capernaum, on the opposite shore, which they actually did, after the miracle. This accords best with all the details as given by the three evangelists."[2]

The Training of the Disciples. "Jesus will not have them to be clinging only to the sense of his bodily presence, — as ivy, needing always an outward support, — but as hardy forest trees which can brave a blast; and this time he puts them forth into the danger alone, even as some loving mother bird thrusts her fledglings from the nest, that they may find their own wings, and learn to use them. And by the issue he will awaken in them a confidence in his ever-ready help."[1]

While he sent the multitudes away, which he could do more easily if the disciples went first as an example, and as showing that Jesus had completed his work for the day.

[1] Trench.

[2] Prof. Schaff in *Rev. Com.*

23 And (when after) he had sent the multitudes away, [c] he went up into (a the) mountain apart to pray: and when [d] (the evening even) was come, he was there alone.

24 But the (ship boat) was now in the midst of the sea, (tossed with distressed by the) waves; for the wind was contrary.

25 And [d] in the fourth watch of the night (Jesus went he came) unto them, walking (on upon) the sea.

26 And when the disciples saw him walking on the sea, [e] they were troubled, saying, It is [f] (a sprit; an apparition); and they cried out for fear.

c Luke 6. 12 & 9. 28. Cp. Mark 1. 35 & Luke 5. 16. *d* Cp. Mark 13. 35. *e* Cp. Luke 24. 37. *f* Wisd. 17. 15.

23. **He went up into a**, the, **mountain**, the hills back of the plain. **Apart.** Privately, by himself alone. **To pray**, as his disciples must pray, if they would be like their Master. "And as he prayed, the faithful stars in the heavens shone out." **And when the evening was come.** The second or late evening, beginning with sunset. The darkness had now descended upon the whole scene. **He was there alone.** This season of prayer alone with God lasted several hours, for it began in the evening after sunset; and he did not come to his disciples till the fourth watch, or between three and six o'clock the next morning (ver. 25).

WHY JESUS PRAYED. (1) To keep in constant communion with his heavenly Father. He always kept in communication with his base of supplies. "Jesus was wont, even as we are, to refresh a wasted strength by draughts from the celestial springs; and as Antæus, in his wrestling, recovered himself as he touched the ground, so we find Jesus, in the great crises of his life, falling back upon heaven."[1] (2) He needed the things he asked for, — strength, hope, wisdom, long vision, patience. (3) This was another crisis in his experience. The people desired then and there to make him a king (John), thus renewing with special force one of his three great temptations in the wilderness, — to obtain a worldly kingdom, and greatness and honor, with ease and plenty and immediate success, instead of a spiritual kingdom and the salvation of men by the hard and slow way of self-denial and the cross.

II. THE DISCIPLES IN A STORM AT SEA. CONTRARY WINDS. 24. **But the ship** (the fishing boat) **was now in the midst of the sea**, which was here only about five miles across. When Jesus came to them they had gone twenty-five or thirty furlongs (John 6 : 19), not quite three miles. **Tossed with waves.** The expression in the original is forcible, "tortured by the waves." The corresponding noun, βάσανος, is translated *torments* in Matt. 4 : 24, "the rack or instrument of torture by which one is forced to divulge the truth." The sea was writhing like a man in agony. The Sea of Galilee is peculiarly liable to these sudden storms. (See on 8 : 24.)

> "The winds like demons scream and rave!
> The sheeted foam blends wave with wave!"[2]

For the wind was contrary. From the north or northeast. From any point on the eastern shore, the disciples would require to steer northward in order to reach Bethsaida. But a contrary wind, blowing strongly from the northeast, drove them back far into the sea; so that the real direction in which they went was westerly, toward Capernaum.

CONTRARY WINDS. In every life there are contrary winds, opposing our progress, interfering with our hopes, fierce temptations urging us from our course of duty. And yet all these are meant to be a means of strength, of training, of education, of higher character. They mean sweeter harps, higher thrones, brighter crowns. "Botanists tell us that the fruits on a tree are arrested growths. They would naturally develop into new twigs and branches, but the progress is checked in some way, and the growths are stunted. Yet the tree does not allow them to be failures; it turns its thwarted developments into something even better than its first hopes. So it may be with thwarted hopes and plans in human life: they may become rich fruits in the character."[3]

III. JESUS APPEARS TO THEM WALKING ON THE WATER. Although they seem alone, yet the eye of Jesus is watching them (Mark).

25. **And in the fourth watch of the night.** Between three and six o'clock in the morning. The night was divided by the Romans into four watches, of about three hours each, from sunset to sunrise. **Jesus went unto them, walking on the sea.** In the extremity of their danger, exhaustion, and despondency, Jesus came to his disciples by his supernatural power over nature. He was, and is, Lord of every element and force of nature, and could control and wield them at his will.

26. **They were troubled, saying, It is a**

[1] H. Burton. [2] Geo. Lansing Taylor. [3] J. R. Miller, D. D.

27 But straightway Jē'sus spake unto them, saying, [g] Be of good cheer; it is I; [g] be not afraid.

28 And Pē'tēr answered him and said, Lord, if it be thou, bid me come unto thee (on) upon the (waters.) waters.

29 And he said, Come. And (when) Pē'tēr (was come) went down (out of) from the (ship, he) boat, and [h] walked (on) upon the (waters,) waters, to (go) come to Jē'sus.

30 But when he saw the wind, (boisterous,) he was afraid; and beginning to sink, he cried (out,) out, saying, [i] Lord, save me.

31 And immediately Jē'sus stretched forth (his) his hand, and (caught) took hold of him, and (said) saith unto him, [j] O thou of little faith, wherefore didst thou [k] doubt?

g ch. 17. 7. Cp. Deut. 31. 6 & Isai. 41. 13 & 43. 1, 2 & John 16. 33. *h* Cp. John 21. 7. *i* Cp. ch. 8. 25, 26. *j* See ch. 6. 30. *k* Cp. James 1. 6.

spirit. The word in the Greek is not the usual one for "spirit." It was rather an apparition, a ghost, a phantom, a spectre, and hence to them a sign of disaster or death. "He would appear to them at first like a dark moving speck upon the waters; then as a human figure." He may have been magnified in the dimness of early dawn, as often happens in a mist or in a mirage.

They cried out for fear (the apparition was worse than the storm), and therefore (ver. 27) **straightway Jesus spake unto them.** They could recognize the familiar tones of his voice. **Be of good cheer; it is I.** Your Master; I, who a few months ago bade the storm cease by my "Peace, be still;" I, who have wrought so many miracles in your presence; I, who am the Son of God.

IV. Peter's Strange Experience. 28. **Lord, if it be thou.** Rather, "*since* it is thou;" not expressing a doubt, or at most but the lingering echo of doubts driven away by Christ's assuring words. **Bid me come unto thee on the water,** or waters. Not "*let* me," but "give me the word of *command*."

Why Peter made this Request. (1) It was in striking harmony with his impulsive, sanguine, bold, and self-confident character at this time. (2) There was doubtless a commingling of higher and lower motives, as is usual. He wanted to greet his Master with glad welcome of love; he wanted to show his confidence in him; he wanted to express his natural courage and his boyish delight in adventure. There was possibly some pride and self-conceit, a desire to outdo the others and to show his courage and his willingness to do anything his Master did. It may have been a partial reaction from his former fears of the storm.

29. **And he said, Come.** Make a trial of your faith. Jesus knew that by permitting him to make the trial, Peter would learn some very important lessons he needed much. **He walked on the water.** Not necessarily very far; and yet so long as he thus walked, it was through supernatural aid from Christ, which could operate upon him only so long as he had faith.

30. **But when he saw the wind boisterous,** *i. e.*, the high waves, impelled by the wind rushing against him, **he was afraid; and beginning to sink.** He looked at his troubles instead of to Him who could sustain him. We have always reason for fear and discouragement when we do this. **He cried, saying, Lord, save me.** Peter had sense enough and faith enough to do the one sensible thing. Here was an example of genuine prayer; short, earnest, to the point, prompted by a sense of need, looking to Jesus, answered.

31. **And immediately.** Mark the *immediately*. Jesus did not delay. **Jesus stretched forth his hand, and caught him.** He answers to Peter's faith in him, although that faith was small. **O thou of little faith.** Real faith, but too little of it. **Wherefore didst thou doubt?** Why could not you, who have witnessed my power so many times, hold on a little longer, and against seeming difficulties? Peter had courage and faith, but both were imperfect.

Compare his actions a year later, when he was confident that he would die with Jesus before he would deny him, followed so soon by his three denials and his repentance. Perhaps this scene among the waves was a preparation for that more terrible trial and experience.

Lessons from Peter's Experience. (1) We learn a lesson against over-confidence in self, against the least tinge of conceit. It is best not to sing too loudly, although it expresses our purpose and hope. (2) We learn a lesson of faith in Jesus. He is ready to help even weak and imperfect faith, and answer the cry "Lord, save me." (3) We learn that we must look beyond the danger to Jesus himself. Looking at ourselves, at our weakness, our unworthiness, we sink in despair; but looking to Jesus, we find assurance and hope and cheer. It is the same

32 And when they were (come / gone up) into the (ship, / boat,) the wind ceased.
33 (Then / And) [l] they that were in the (ship / came and / boat) [m] worshipped him, saying, [n] Of a truth thou art [o] the Son of God.
34 ¶ [p] And when they (were gone / had crossed) over, they came (into / to) the land, (of / unto) [q] Gĕn-nĕs'a-rĕt.
35 And when the men of that place (had knowledge of / knew) him, they sent (out) into all that (country / region) round about, and [r] brought unto him all that were (diseased; / sick;)
36 (And / and they) besought him that they might only touch the [s] (hem / border) of his garment: and [t] as many as touched were made (perfectly) whole.

l ver. 22. *m* See ch. 8. 2. *n* Cp. John 6. 14. *o* ch. 16. 16 & 26. 63. Ps. 2. 7. Mark 1. 1. Luke 1. 35 & 4. 41. John 1. 49 & 9. 35 & 10. 36 & 11. 27 & 20. 31. Acts 9. 20, *al.* Cp. ch. 3. 17. *p* For vers. 34–36, see Mark 6. 53–56. Cp. John 6. 24, 25. *q* Luke 5. 1. *r* ch. 4. 24. *s* See ch. 9. 20. *t* Mark 3. 10. Luke 6. 19. Cp. Acts 5. 15.

when we look at the evils and dangers in political, social, and business life, and do not also look beyond them to the Gospel, and the ever-living Jesus, and the power of the Holy Spirit, and what they have already done for the world. "The most wonderful things in life are not our dangers, but our deliverances."

32. **The wind ceased.** A beautiful word in the Greek ; the wind grew weary, sank away like one who is weary with his fierce struggles, and lies down to rest.

33. **They that were in the ship.** R. V., "boat." "Others besides the disciples." **Came and worshipped him.** Reverently bowing and making the following confession. Mark says of the disciples: "They were sore amazed in themselves beyond measure, and wondered. For they considered not the miracle of the loaves, for their heart was hardened." **Of a truth thou art the Son of God.** This new display of power had convinced them. It was not so marvellous as the miracle of the loaves, but was more striking in form.

IV. HEALING MANY AT GENNESARET, vers. 34–36.

34. **And when they were gone over,** which John says was immediately (John 6: 21), **they came into the land of Gennesaret.** A small district four miles long and two or three wide, on the west side of the Sea of Galilee, to which it gave one of its names. Capernaum was situated in this district. Josephus describes it as the garden of the whole land, and possessing a fertility and loveliness almost unparalleled.[1]

35. **Had knowledge of him.** Recognized Jesus, knew who he was, and that he had arrived upon their shores. **They sent out into all that country.** Encouraged by the marvellous miracles he had just performed. Some had been fed in the Bethsaida desert, others had heard the story of the disciples upon the sea. **Brought unto him all that were diseased.** Some had not heard, and needed to be notified; others were unable to come of themselves; others needed the impulse of an invitation, and the encouragement of those who believed. There are the same kinds of spiritually needy ones now, and it is the duty of all who know Jesus to send out into all the country around and bring them to him.

36. **Only touch the hem of his garment.** A woman had been thus healed in the presence of a crowd, so that these people were not superstitious, but had strong faith. See notes on chap. 9: 20–22.

[1] Alexander.

CHAPTER 15.

SECTION XIV. — VARIOUS ASPECTS OF THE GALILEAN MINISTRY (*continued*).

1. SOME FALSE TRADITIONS OF THE ELDERS, vers. 1–20.
2. THE SYROPHENICIAN WOMAN'S FAITH, vers. 21–28.
3. MULTITUDES HEALED, vers. 29–31.
4. FEEDING OF THE FOUR THOUSAND, vers. 32–39.

Time.

Spring and Summer of A. D. 29.

Place.

Galilee and surrounding regions.

1 [u] THEN (there come) to Jē'ṣus [v] from (Je-ru'sa-lem scribes) Phar'i-sees and [v] Phar'i-sees, which were of (Je-ru'sa-lem, scribes),
saying,
2 [w] Why do thy disciples transgress [x] the tradition of [y] the elders? [z] for they wash not their hands when they eat bread.
3 (But And) he answered and said unto them, Why do ye also transgress the commandment of God (by because of) your tradition?

u For vers. 1–20, see Mark 7. 1–23. *v* Mark 3. 22. *w* Cp. ch. 9. 11. *x* Gal. 1. 14. Col. 2. 8. *y* Heb. 11. 2. *z* Luke 11. 38.

I. SOME FALSE TRADITIONS OF THE ELDERS, vers. 1–20.

TIME. April, A. D. 29, closely following the last chapter.

PLACE. Capernaum.

PARALLELS. Mark 7: 1–23.

1. **Then came.** During his stay in Gennesaret and Capernaum after feeding the five thousand. **Scribes and Pharisees.** Those most given to traditions and ceremonial observances. **Which were of Jerusalem.** Those who, on their way to the Passover, had seen the miracle of the loaves and many other miracles, and the desire of the people to make Jesus king, would report what they had seen and heard, and awaken no little excitement at Jerusalem. So that after the feast (they would not leave the feast for this purpose, of course) these leading men went down to Galilee, probably as a deputation, to see what was going on, and what measures could be best taken to put a stop to it. **Saying.** The question arose from what they had seen the apostles do on some recent occasion. This was the first thing they could find to criticise.

2. **Why do thy disciples,** and you claiming to be an authoritative religious teacher, **transgress the tradition of the elders?** You should set a better example. *Tradition* "denotes what is passed along from one to another, and, among the Jews, the body of Rabbinical interpretation of the written law, preserved by oral transmission from one generation to another." "They compared the written word to water; the traditionary exposition to the wine which must be mingled with it." [1]

They wash not their hands when they eat bread. This does not in the least refer to washing their hands for health or cleanliness. "The Israelites, who, like other Oriental nations, fed with their fingers, washed their hands before meals, for the sake of cleanliness. But these customary washings were distinct from the ceremonial ablutions: in the former water was *poured upon the hands;* in the latter the hands were *plunged in water.* When, therefore, some of the Pharisees remarked that our Lord's disciples ate with '*unwashen hands*,' it is not to be understood literally that they did not at all wash their hands, but that they did not *wash them ceremonially*, according to their own practice." [2] It was to avoid ceremonial pollution from contact, or possible contact, with things ceremonially unclean. "The duty of washing before meat is not inculcated in the law, but only in the traditions of the scribes. So rigidly did the Jews observe it, that Rabbi Akiba, being imprisoned, and having water scarcely sufficient to sustain life given him, preferred dying of thirst to eating without washing his hands." [1] The Pharisaic law was a caricature, a distorted exaggeration of a law meant for health and cleanliness.

3. **He answered and said unto them** by an *ad hominem* argument. How can you blame me while you are doing far worse? **Why do ye also.** He does not deny that his disciples were careless about the traditions of the elders, but ye also

[1] Alford. [2] Cambridge Bible. So *Int. Crit. Com.* See, also, Farrar's *The Life of Lives*, "Pharisaic Religionism."

4 For God commanded, saying, [a] Honour thy father and thy mother: and, [b] He that curseth speaketh evil of father or mother, let him die the death.

5 But ye say, Whosoever shall say to his father or his mother, It is a gift, by whatsoever thou mightest be profited by me is given to God;

6 And he shall not honour his father, or his mother, he shall be free. And thus have ye [c] made void the commandment of God because of your tradition.

7 [d] Ye hypocrites, well did Esaias prophesy of you, saying,

8 [e] This people draweth nigh unto me with their mouth, and honoureth me with their lips; but their heart is far from me.

9 But in vain they do worship me, teaching for doctrines the commandments of men.

a Cited from Ex. 20. 12, which see. *b* Cited from Ex. 21. 17, which see. *c* Gal. 3. 17 (Gk.). Cp. Rom. 2. 23. *d* ch. 23. 13. *e* Cited from Isai. 29. 13. Cp. Ezek. 33. 31. *f* Col. 2. 22. Tit. 1. 14.

transgress something far greater, even the commandment of God.

God's Command. Jesus now gives an example of what he charged against them.

4. **For God commanded**, in the Fifth Commandment, **Honour thy father and mother.** Treat them with reverence and affection; including respect, obedience, and support. **He that curseth**, speaketh evil of, revileth, **father or mother** (Ex. 21 : 17; Lev. 20 : 9). To curse is to treat with disrespect, evil speaking, neglect. **Let him die the death.** Heb., "dying he shall die." This is the appropriate penalty of such a crime, because it strikes at the very root of national life and prosperity, and of religion and morality.

The Pharisees' Tradition. 5. **But ye say**, in contradiction to God's command, **Whosoever shall say to his father or his mother, It is a gift**, etc. This is clearer in the R. V. "That wherewith thou mightest have been profited by me is given to God."

6. **And honour not his father . . . he shall be free** from the obligation to honor them by supporting them, or caring for them in their old age. Thus any man could be excused from spending money for the comfort and support of his parents if only he would contribute the amount to the Temple treasury, or the support of religion. The Rabbis, in commenting on the Mosaic law of vows (Lev. ch. 27; Num. ch. 30), decided that any man wishing to avoid the burden of supporting his parents could make a vow to give all such money to the Temple, but without specifying the time when it was to be given. So that he could use the money all his life for himself, but was forbidden to give any of this consecrated money to his parents. Dr. Abbott well says, "Such casuistry would be incredible were not its parallel to be found in the Jesuitical casuistry of the seventeenth century."

Thus have ye made the commandment of God of none effect, "deprived of its authority," [1] "abrogated," [2] **by your tradition.** Farrar, in his *Life of Lives*, quotes from Dr. Frankl, a Jewish writer, who, speaking of the Pharisees to-day in Jerusalem, says that to call a man a Pharisee "is the bitterest term of reproach." "They proudly separate themselves from the rest of their co-religionists. Fanatical, bigoted, intolerant, quarrelsome, and in truth irreligious, with them the outward observance of the ceremonial law is everything; the moral law little binding." [3]

7. **Ye hypocrites.** *Hypocrite* is etymologically *an actor*, who plays the part of a hero, a king, a nobleman, and in dress and speech represents them, while he is really an entirely different person, however worthy and great he may be. The ancient actors used to play in masks, which made the word a still more perfect metaphor for a hypocrite.

Esaias, Isaiah. **Prophesy** (Isai. 29 : 13). What he said to the Jews of his day was still more applicable to the Pharisees of Christ's day.

8. **Their heart is far from me.** Formalism had killed the religion of the heart.

9. **In vain they do worship me.** Such worship was good for nothing as worship. It neither pleased God nor profited man. It was of no use for character or morals. **Teaching for**, as their, **doctrines**, precepts, duties, principles of virtue, **the commandments**, binding rules and regulations, **of men**, like their traditions. The effect was seen in the character of the Pharisees themselves. They were particular about trifles, but cared nothing for the principles of morality. They could tithe to the last atom of mint, anise, and cummin, and then devour widows' houses, be dishonest, immoral, and selfish. Their formal prayers fostered pride, but kept them from no "respectable" crime. "And that was why the Pharisees were the only class which Jesus cared publicly to expose."

[1] Meyer. [2] Morison. [3] Frankl, *The Jews in the East*, ii. 27.

10 ¶ And he called to him the multitude, and said unto them, [g] Hear, and understand:

11 [h] Not that which goeth into the mouth defileth a man; but that which cometh out of the mouth, this defileth a man.

12 Then came his disciples, and said unto him, Knowest thou that the Phăr'ĭ-sees were [i] offended, after they heard this saying?

13 But he answered and said, [j] Every plant which my heavenly Father hath not planted, [k] shall be rooted up.

14 Let them alone: [l] they be blind leaders of the blind. And [m] if the blind lead the blind, both shall fall into a ditch.

15 Then answered Pe'ter and said unto him, [n] Declare unto us this parable.

16 And Je'sus said, [o] Are ye also yet without understanding?

17 Do not ye yet understand, that [p] whatsoever entereth in at the mouth goeth into the belly, and is cast out into the draught?

g ch. 13. 51. *h* See Acts 10. 14, 15. *i* See ch. 5. 29. *j* Cp. Isai. 60. 21 & 61. 3 & John 15. 1, 2 & 1 Cor. 3. 9. *k* Jude 12. *l* ch. 23. 16, 24. Cp. Isai. 56. 10 & Mal. 2. 8. *m* Luke 6. 39. *n* Cp. ch. 13. 36. *o* ch. 16. 9. *p* Cp. 1 Cor. 6. 13.

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10. **And he called the multitude**, who had been standing in the background listening to the discussion. **Said unto them, Hear, and understand.** Let me explain to you about this washing of hands, lest you misunderstand my meaning. The Pharisees were too prejudiced.

11. **Not that which goeth into the mouth defileth a man**, makes him common, morally unclean, impure. It cannot affect his character. Jesus does not say that it was unimportant to keep the Mosaic law distinguishing between clean and unclean meats. The meat cannot affect his character, but disobedience can. Nor does he refer at all to the fact that one may take disease into his system through eating and drinking; and that disobedience to the laws of health is a moral wrong, and deteriorates the character. It is the moral act, and not what is eaten, that defiles the man. Jesus lays down the principle that what is taken into the body does not affect the character. Eating ambrosia and drinking nectar do not make one heavenly; nor, if transubstantiation were true, could eating the real body of Jesus make any one better or holier.

But that which cometh out of the mouth, the catalogue of evils given in verses 19, 20. **This defileth a man.** Because they come from the heart, and affect the character and the moral nature. They defile the soul, which is the man. It is not the coming out of the mouth that defiles, but the kind of things which come out. The uttering them not only shows what is in the heart, but also intensifies the evil qualities themselves.

12. **His disciples . . . said, . . . Knowest thou that the Pharisees were offended**, *scandalized*, irritated; they *stumbled* over it as an obstacle to accepting his teachings; "*they could not get over* it;" they were more opposed than ever. **This saying**, in verse 11, as the sum or basis of his teaching on this subject.

13. **He answered and said, Every plant**, etc. The plant symbolizes the doctrines, teachings, principles. Those which are merely human, and do not have their source in God, shall be rooted up. They cannot endure. The Pharisees' traditional teachings must be swept away, because they are not from God. They may be offended, but that does not help the matter. Even what I teach, if it be not from my heavenly Father, cannot prevail. Therefore the Pharisees need not stumble over my teaching. If it is true, they cannot destroy it. If it is false, it will be destroyed without their aid.

14. **Therefore let them alone.** For nothing you can say or do will change them, and time will test which teachings are true. Wait and see. He does not say, Let their teachings alone; for Jesus himself contested them by positive teaching of the truth. It is by discussion that the bad doctrines were rooted up. **They be blind leaders of the blind.** They do not see the truth, and are leading the people into errors, into moral evils, and the result will be that **both shall fall into the ditch.** "Palestine was full of wells, cisterns, pits, quarries, often unguarded, and it abounded in blind persons. Such events as the blind falling into them could not have been uncommon."

These blind leaders induced the people to reject the Messiah. They filled them with sins, with false principles, with selfishness and contentions; and within 40 years the city, the Temple, and the nation perished.

15. **Then answered Peter.** He did not quite

18 But *q* those the things which proceed out of the mouth come forth from out of the heart;
and they defile the man.
19 For out of the heart proceed come forth *r* evil thoughts, *s* murders, adulteries, fornications, thefts, false witness, *t* blasphemies: railings:
20 *u* These these are *the things* the things which defile a the man: but *r* to eat with unwashen hands
defileth not a the man.
21 ¶ *w* Then And Jē′sus went out thence, and departed withdrew into the coasts parts of Tȳre and Sī′dŏn.
22 And, behold, a *x* woman of Ca′naan Ca′naan-it-ish woman came out from those borders, and cried, unto him,
saying, *y* Have mercy on me, O Lord, *thou* thou son of Dā′vid; my daughter is grievously vexed with a devil.

q ch. 12. 34. James 3. 6. *r* James 2. 4. Cp. ch. 9. 4 & Gen. 6. 5 & Ps. 56. 5, *al.* *s* ch. 5. 22, 28. See Ex. 20. 13–16. *t* Eph. 4. 31. Col. 3. 8. 1 Tim. 6. 4. *u* 1 Cor. 6. 9, 10. *v* Mark 7. 2, 5. *w* For vers. 21–28, see Mark 7. 24–30. *x* Gen. 10. 15, 19. Judg. 1. 30–33. Cp. Mark 7. 26 (& mg.). *y* See ch. 9. 27.

understand the parable or illustration, and wanted more light, and Jesus gave it to him in the following verses.

II. THE SYROPHENICIAN WOMAN'S FAITH, vers. 21–28.

Time. Early Summer, A. D. 29, closely following the above discussion.

Place. Phenicia, of which the chief cities were Tyre and Sidon.

Parallel. Mark 7: 24–30.

The Great Sorrow. 21. **Then Jesus went thence.** This was a retreat. The Pharisees were more bitterly opposed to him than ever. "It is difficult for us to imagine the hot indignation which his teaching awakened in the Pharisees." Friends, too, were alienated (John 6: 59, etc.); so that "Capernaum was again hostile and perhaps unsafe."[1] That discussion marked a crisis in the life of Jesus, and his great Galilean ministry was practically ended.[2] Jesus wished no one to know where he was going (Mark). **Departed into the coasts**, borders, and the region included within them. *The borders* were probably the mountain spurs and hills on the eastern border, between the high region of Galilee and the plain of Phenicia, where even now the more wealthy inhabitants have summer residences. **Of Tyre and Sidon.** Two flourishing seaports and capitals of Phenicia, a narrow, level district along the shores of the Mediterranean. Sidon was twenty miles north of Tyre. The journey was not long, as Tyre is only about thirty-five miles, and Sidon fifty-five miles, from the Sea of Galilee. They were heathen, but active commercial and manufacturing people; wealthy, luxurious, and dissolute.

Lessons. (1) We should not be discouraged because we meet with opposition. (2) Opposition is to be treated in different ways according to circumstances. (3) Even the most busy and useful people should take time for retirement and repose. The time taken to sharpen the scythe brings no loss to the mower.

22. **And, behold, a woman of Canaan.** Mark says a Greek or Gentile, but a Syrophenician by race. "She was a Gentile as to religion, probably Greek-speaking, under the influence of Greek manners and customs; but descended from the old stock of the Phenicians of Syria, who belonged to the Canaanites of the Old Testament."[3] There were two branches of Phenicians, one in Syria and one in the Carthage region of Africa.

Cried unto him. Jesus had gone privately into a house, but he could not be hid (Mark 7: 24); the woman in her great anxiety for help had found him. She had doubtless heard of his miracles of healing in Galilee, and some who heard the Sermon on the Mount were from Tyre and Sidon (Mark 3: 8). **Have mercy on me.** For her daughter's trouble was her own. **O Lord, thou Son of David.** She so addresses Jesus, because, from living in the neighborhood of the Jews, she was familiar with their Messianic expectations, and with the Messiah's title, as well as with the Messianic reputation of Jesus.[3] **My daughter** (Mark says "little daughter" in the Greek) **is grievously vexed with a devil**, or demon. Lit., *badly demonized* (see on 8: 28–34). Mark calls it "an unclean spirit," because it produces uncleanness of body and soul.

The Torment of this disease may be learned from the description of similar cases. One such, a boy, is described as often falling into the fire and often into the water (Matt. 17: 15, 18). The spirit makes him dumb, "and wheresoever he taketh him, he teareth him, and he foameth, and gnasheth with his teeth, and pineth away" (Mark 9: 17, 18). The Gadarene demoniac was wild and fierce, "crying, and cutting himself with stones."

[1] Prof. Swete on *Mark.* [2] So *Int. Crit. Com.* [3] Meyer.

23 But he answered her not a word. And his disciples came and besought him, saying, [z] Send her away; for she crieth after us.

24 But he answered and said, [a] I [am / was] not sent but unto the lost sheep of the house of Ĭs'ra-el.

25 [Then came she / But she came] and [b] worshipped him, saying, Lord, help me.

26 [But / And] he answered and said, It is not meet to take the children's bread and to [c] cast [it / it] to [the] dogs.

z Cp. ch. 14. 15. a Rom. 15. 8. See ch. 10. 5, 6. b See ch. 8. 2. c ch. 7. 6.

FAITH TRIUMPHING OVER GREAT OBSTACLES.

First Obstacle. The fact that this woman was a foreigner and a heathen, brought up without a knowledge of the true God, and in education and training opposed to the teachings and religion of Jesus. She must overcome her prejudices and the prejudices of her countrymen. Her faith overcame this obstacle. That she went to Jesus at all shows her faith.

Second Obstacle. She came without invitation to one she had probably never spoken with, perhaps not seen, and who was of a race which despised both her race and religion, and who was trying to avoid all notice and attention. She overcame this obstacle by the knowledge of what Jesus had already done in Galilee, and especially at an earlier time, for people from her own country (Luke 6: 17), and by her knowledge that Jesus was thought to be the true Messiah from God.

Third Obstacle. Seeming Neglect. 23. **But he answered her not a word.** He appeared to treat her with neglect and indifference. It seems, by what follows, as if he arose and left the house. Various reasons are given for this silence. (1) To test and deepen the woman's faith, and make her receptive of larger blessing. (2) That her faith might encourage men in all ages to trust in Jesus. (3) Some think Jesus was really perplexed as to what he ought to do. He was sent only to the lost sheep of Israel. He had commanded his disciples to preach and heal only among the Jews (10: 5, 6). He is now asked to break over his own instructions. But he saw that there was a higher law which made this exception right. The mother overcame this obstacle by still pressing her petition, like the woman before the unjust judge.

Fourth Obstacle. The interference of the disciples, **who besought him, saying, Send her away; for she crieth after us.** "Crying is a large share of woman's occupation in the East. Women are employed as public mourners at a funeral, when they attend to whatever demonstrations are to be made, often crying aloud, shrieking, and tearing the hair. They go before army officers to plead for the release of conscripted recruits. They cry for mercy and kind treatment for prisoners. They plead with the landlord who is about to evict his tenants."[1] "To one who has ever held any prominent or official position in the East the persistency of pleading women is a fact which he will never forget. They will not be driven from their purpose by a rough manner. Severe language does not deter them. They are not wearied by delays. They will sit and wait hour after hour, and come day after day, ignoring all kinds of refusals. They are importunate beyond anything that is ever experienced in our Western life."[2]

Note. There are still a few disciples and churches who would send away the poor and the sorrowing, those who call for help, collectors for missions and for charity, because they are a trouble, and "cry after us."

But they probably meant that he should grant her request and thus stop her cries, for Jesus replies to their request by giving as his reason for his treatment of her, that he was (ver. 24) **not sent but unto the lost sheep of the house of Israel.** That was his first work, as he had before said to his disciples. "It was of primary moment that he should make sure of a foothold on which he might plant his moral machinery for moving the world."[3] To have worked first among the Gentiles would have rendered the founding of the kingdom far more difficult. A very little fire can kindle a city or a world; but ten times as much heat as that little fire contains would not, if widely diffused, kindle anything.

25. **Then came she and worshipped him,** by prostrating herself before him in the Oriental fashion, kneeling down and bowing her head to the ground. She probably had overheard the conversation of Jesus with his disciples.

Fifth Obstacle. Jesus shows her a reason why she could not claim his help.

26. **But he answered,** with a comparison probably not unfamiliar to her as expressing the feelings of the Jews toward the Gentiles. **It is not meet,** fitting, proper, **to take** (to take away) **the children's bread, and to cast it to**

[1] H. C. Trumbull, in *Sunday-School Times.* [2] Hon. Selah Merrill, Consul at Jerusalem. [3] President Dwight.

27 And she said, Truth, Lord: yet for even the dogs eat of [d] the crumbs which fall from their masters' table.

28 Then Jē'sus answered and said unto her, O woman, [e] great is thy faith: [f] be it done unto thee even as thou wilt. [g] And her daughter was [f] made whole healed from that very hour.

d Cp. Luke 16. 21. *e* See ch. 9. 2. *f* Cp. ch. 8. 13. *g* ch. 9. 22 & 17. 18. Cp. John 4. 52, 53.

dogs (literally, the little dogs, domestic dogs). The "children" are the Jews; the "dogs" are the Gentiles. "There was some reason lying at the base of the designation. The heathens around were, in the mass, exceedingly unclean and ferocious; barking too, incessantly, at the true God and true godliness."[1] Jesus softens the usual harsh expression of the proverb into house dogs, or pet dogs, the companions and friends of the children. Edersheim suggests that there is hope in the very expression; for the children and the domestic dogs had the same master, and all belonged to the home, though in different degrees. Mark adds another way of hope in the same direction in recording Jesus' expression, "Let the children *first* be filled." Jew and Gentile are both to be fed with the bread from heaven, only it should first be given to the Jew.[2]

27. **And** (but) **she said.** "Not all the snows of her native Lebanon could quench the fire of love which was burning on the altar of her heart, and prompt as an echo came forth the glorious and immortal answer,"[3] **Truth, Lord.** But out of its very truth she brings an argument for the granting of her request. **Yet.** Rather, as in R. V., "for even." It is not in spite of, but because of, the truth of the proverb that she argues for help. **The dogs eat of the crumbs which fall from their masters' table.** "These were probably something more than what would accidentally fall from the table. It was the custom during the meal for the guests after thrusting their hands into the common dish to wipe them on the soft white part of the bread, which, having thus used, they threw to the dogs."[4] So let me have the crumbs, what is left over after you have done all you plan for the Jews. It will not take anything away from them if you help me. If I am a dog, I can fitly ask to be treated as a dog.

28. **O woman, great is thy faith.** (1) Her faith was great in its *love*, being for her daughter. (2) It was great in its earnestness. (3) It was great in its foundations, the power and love of the Messiah, and his past good deeds to others. (4) It was great in its humility, conquering self. (5) It was great in overcoming obstacles. (6) It was great in its nature,—a perfect trust in the goodness and love of the Saviour. She went home, believing before she saw that what was promised had been done. "Blessed are they that have not seen and yet have believed." (7) It was great in its fruits. **And her daughter was made whole from that very hour.** As she found on her return (Mark 7: 30); for she acted upon her faith.

Lessons from the Syrophenician Woman's Faith. (1.) The individual soul and the world are *grievously vexed* with the devils of sin, lust, intemperance, dishonesty, selfishness, cruelty, hate.

(2.) There is no power but that of Jesus and his Gospel that can cast them out.

(3.) The church, all Christians, should be intensely earnest in seeking to bring to Jesus himself all who are thus vexed, allowing no obstacle to prevent them, and no delays to discourage.

(4.) The greatness of her faith was shown by its overcoming so many obstacles which would have been impassable barriers to a weak faith. She turned her very mountains of difficulty into stairways to success.

(5.) The delays and obstacles in her way were the means of increasing her faith. Faith grows. It grows by a more intimate acquaintance with the person in whom we trust. We see in him more sterling qualities, we know more certainly his reliable character, and thus we naturally trust him more. The Syrophenician was much better acquainted with Jesus at the close of this critical half hour than she was at its beginning. Experience and knowledge are great strengtheners of faith.

(6.) When God delays the answer to our prayers, it is to prepare us for larger and better answers. Such faith always succeeds in obtaining either what we ask or something better.

In the charming little booklet, *Expectation Corner*, the best tract on prayer I have ever seen, Adam Slowman was led into the Lord's treasure houses, and among many other wonders there revealed to him was the "Delayed Blessings Office," where God kept certain things

[1] Morison.

[2] The story of Tobias and his dog, in the book of Tobit, in the *Apocrypha*.

[3] Farrar.

[4] Cambridge Bible.

29 [h] And Jē′ṣus departed [from] thence, and came [i] nigh unto the sea of Găl′ĭ-lee; and [he] [j] went up into [a / the] mountain, and sat [down] there.

30 And [great multitudes / there] came unto him [great multitudes,] having with them [those that were / the] [k] lame, blind, dumb, maimed, and many others, and [they] cast them down at [Je′sus' / his] feet; and he healed them:

31 [l] [Insomuch / insomuch] that the multitude wondered, when they saw the dumb [to speak, / speaking,] the [m] maimed [to be] whole, [and] the lame [to walk, / walking,] and the blind [to see: / seeing:] and [n] they glorified [o] the God of Ĭṣ′rạ-el.

32 ¶ [p] [Then / And] Jē′ṣus called [unto him] his disciples, [unto him,] and said, [q] I have compassion on the multitude, because they continue with me now three days and have nothing to eat: and I [will / would] not send them away fasting, lest [haply] they faint in the way.

h For ver. 29–31, cp. Mark 7. 31–37. *i* ch. 4. 18. John 6. 1. *j* ch. 5. 1. *k* See ch. 11. 5. *l* See ch. 9. 33. *m* ch. 18. 8. Mark 9. 43. *n* ch. 9. 8. *o* Isai. 29. 23. Luke 1. 68. Acts 13. 17. *p* For vers. 32–39, see Mark 8. 1–10. Cp. ch. 14. 14–21. *q* Cp. ch. 9. 36.

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prayed for until the wise time came to send them. "It takes a long time for some pensioners to learn that *delays are not denials*. . . . Ah, there are secrets of love and wisdom in the 'Delayed Blessings Department,' which are little dreamt of. Men would pluck their mercies green when the Lord would have them ripe." *Therefore will the Lord* WAIT, *that he may be gracious unto you* (Isai. 30: 18).[1]

III. MULTITUDES HEALED, vers. 29–31.

TIME. A few days after the miracle in Phenicia.

PLACE. Decapolis, "the region of ten cities," southeast of the Sea of Galilee.

PARALLELS. Mark 7: 31–37.

Here Matthew gives another of his general pictures of the work of Christ for men, of which we have had several before, as 4: 23–25; 8: 16, 17; 9: 35, 36; 11: 4–6. The apostle seems to delight in presenting this portrait of Jesus in all its grace and glory.

29. **Jesus departed . . . thence.** Going still farther north through the territory of Sidon (Mark 7: 31), then eastward through northern Galilee, across the upper Jordan, and down on the east side of **the sea of Galilee**, to the part of Decapolis, "The Ten Cities" (Mark), which bordered on the southeast shore of the lake. He was thus still out of Herod's territory. "He was in the vicinity of Gadara, one of the ten cities." **And went up into a (the) mountain.** "The mountain range running along east of the lake." **And sat down.** The usual posture of a teacher.

30. **And great multitudes came.** Attracted by his teaching and his healing power. The hungry go where there is food; the chilly seek the fire. The previous healing of the Gadarene demoniac in this region would awaken great interest in Jesus. **And cast them down.** Threw them down, indicating their eagerness and haste. **And he healed them.**

31. **The multitude wondered.** "It is a new era — Israel conquers the heathen world, not by force, but by love; not by outward means, but by the manifestation of life power from above. Truly, this is the Messianic conquest and reign; **and they glorified the God of Israel.**"

IV. THE FEEDING OF THE FOUR THOUSAND, vers. 32–39.

TIME. Summer of A. D. 29, closely following the healing of great numbers of the sick.

PLACE. Decapolis, near where he had healed the Gadarene demoniac.

PARALLEL. Mark 8: 1–9.

32. This miracle is so similar to the feeding of the five thousand that there is no need of comment beyond what is said in connection with that miracle (14: 13–23). The two are so similar, even in minute details, that some have thought they were varying accounts of the same event. But in this case the same author would not have repeated them, and referred to them again as separate miracles in 16: 9, 10. And Prof. Gould, in the *Int. Crit. Com.* on Mark, well says that "if the real object of miracles was to meet some human need, then the recurrence of like conditions would lead to a recurrence of the miracle. And in the life of Jesus, with its frequent resort to solitary places, and the disposition of the multitude to follow him wherever he went, the emergency of a hungry crowd in a place where supplies were not to be obtained, would be certain to recur."

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[1] Compare Stanley's prayer, as related in his *Darkest Africa*, vol. i. pp. 2 and 492.

33 And his (the) disciples say unto him, Whence should we have so much bread (many loaves) in the wilderness, (a desert place,) as to fill so great a multitude?

34 And Jē'şus saith unto them, How many loaves have ye? And they said, [r] Seven, and a few little (small) fishes.

35 And he commanded the multitude to sit down on the ground;

36 And (and) he took the seven loaves and the fishes, and he [s] gave thanks, and brake, *them,* and gave to his (the) disciples, and the disciples to the multitude, (multitudes.)

37 And [t] they did all eat, and were filled: and they took up of the broken *meat* that (that which remained) was left over of the broken pieces, seven baskets full.

38 And they that did eat were four thousand men, beside women and children.

39 And he sent away the multitude, (multitudes,) and took ship, (entered into the boat,) and came into the coasts of (borders of) [u] Mag'da-la, (Mag'a-dan.)

r ch. 16. 10. *s* ch. 26. 27. Mark 14. 23. Luke 22. 17, 19. John 6. 11, 23. Acts 27. 35. Rom. 14. 6. 1 Cor. 10. 30 & 11. 24 & 14. 16. 1 Tim. 4. 3, 4. *t* Cp. 2 Kin. 4. 42–44. *u* Josh. 19. 38? 1 Macc. 5. 26, 36? Cp. Mark 8. 10.

37. **Baskets** (σπυρίδας), used in both accounts of this miracle, "is said to denote baskets of coiled or plaited materials, cords or reeds. Sometimes baskets of this sort were of considerable size. It was in a basket of this kind that Saul made his escape over the wall of Damascus (2 Cor. 11: 33).[1] "Large provision baskets or hampers."[2] In all four accounts of the feeding of the 5000 the word κοφίνους is used, of which our word coffins is a transcription. These were hand baskets of various sizes.

39. **Magdala**, R. V. "Magadan," probably at the southwest corner of the plain of Gennesaret.

CHAPTER 16.

SECTION XIV. — VARIOUS ASPECTS OF THE GALILEAN MINISTRY (*continued*), vers. 1–12.

1. THE SIGNS OF THE TIMES, vers. 1–4.
2. THE LEAVEN OF THE PHARISEES, vers. 5–12.

Time.
Summer of A. D. 29.

1 [v] And (The) the Phăr'ĭ-sees also with (and) the Săd'du-çees came, and [w] tempting [x] him (desired him) that he would (to) shew them [y] a sign from heaven.

v For vers. 1–12, see Mark 8. 11–21. *w* See [John 8. 6]. *x* 1 Cor. 1. 22. See ch. 12. 38. *y* Luke 11. 16 & 21. 11.

I. THE SIGNS OF THE TIMES, vers. 1–4.

TIME. Summer, A. D. 29. Immediately after the last chapter.

PLACE. Capernaum, or the plain of Gennesaret, on which was situated Magdala (15 : 39).

PARALLEL. Mark 8: 11–13. Compare Matt. 12 : 38, 39; and Luke 12 : 54–56.

1. **The Pharisees also with the Sadducees.** The opposition was so intense that even these opposite religious parties, "the one being traditionalists, the other skeptics," united in an effort to entrap Jesus by asking him to **shew them a sign from heaven**, some marvel, like the manna, by Moses, or the sun standing still, by Joshua, or fire from heaven, by Elijah on Carmel, or the shekinah light in the tabernacle and temple, or the pillar of cloud and fire. This they asked **tempting** him, not to help them to see the truth, but to discredit Jesus, to make it seem to the people that he was unable to work real wonders from God; for he always refused to do any miracles for the sake of showing his power. They were unwilling to see that Jesus was continually showing signs from heaven, the best kind of signs, for they best expressed the spirit and characteristics of heaven. Mere wonders such as they desired would hinder and not help the coming of the kingdom.

[1] Prof. Swete.

[2] Prof. Vincent.

2 [He / But he] answered and said unto them, [z] When it is evening, ye say, *It will be* fair weather: for the [sky / heaven] is red.

3 And in the morning, *It will be* foul weather [to day: / to-day]: for the [sky / heaven] is red and lowring. [O *ye* hypocrites, *a* ye can / Ye know how to] discern the face of the [sky / heaven]; but [can ye not / ye cannot] *discern* [b] the signs of the times?

4 [c A wicked / An evil] and adulterous generation seeketh after a sign; and there shall no sign be given unto it, but the sign of [the prophet Jo'nas. / Jo'nah.] And [d] he left them, and departed.

5 And [when his / the] disciples [were come / came] to the other side, [they had forgotten / and forgot] to take bread.

6 ¶ [Then / And] Jē'sus said unto them, Take heed and [e] beware of [f] the leaven of the Phăr'ĭ-sees and [of the / of] Săd'du-çees.

z Cp. Luke 12. 54, 55. *a* Luke 12. 56. *b* Cp. ch. 12. 28 & Luke 19. 44. *c* See ch. 12. 39. *d* ch. 4. 13 & 21. 17. *e* Luke 12. 1. *f* 1 Cor. 5. 6–8. Gal. 5. 9.

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2. **He answered.** Sighing deeply in his spirit (Mark), distressed at the blindness of these people, and their obstinate attitude of opposition to all that was best for themselves and their nation, as when he wept over Jerusalem, a few months later. He proceeds to show them the insincerity and uselessness of their request.

When it is evening, for only in the evening did the sign hold. **It will be fair weather**: for **the sky** — heaven, the same word as they used for the place where they wanted the sign — **is red.** This was a usual sign in Palestine for fair weather. The translation "sky" for "heaven" obscures the point of the answer.

3. **In the morning** the same sign predicted stormy weather. **The sky**, the heaven, as above. **O ye hypocrites**, you prove yourselves insincere by your conduct, for **ye can discern the face of the sky**, the heaven. This you study carefully till you know what its varying expressions foretell. **But can ye not?** Better, "ye cannot;" because you are unwilling to study and read them without prejudice, you shut your eyes to them. **Discern the signs of the times**, which then existed and were written more clearly on the spiritual heavens than the signs of the weather on the natural heavens.

They asked for a sign; but the spiritual sky was full of signs. That Jesus was fulfilling the prophecies of the Messiah was a sign. His heavenly teachings and his divine works were signs. They were signs of fair weather, of the sunshine of Heaven's favor, of the coming of the heavenly kingdom, of the grace and glory that were offered to the Jews and to the world.

On the other hand, there were very different signs of the times, signs of the approaching storm which swept the nation away as with a whirlwind, signs in their own character and conduct, signs in the sins and crimes which in Deuteronomy were threatened with direst punishment, signs in the hate of the rulers that led to the crucifixion of the Messiah.

4. **A wicked . . . the sign of the prophet Jonas**, Jonah. See on 12:38, 39. This sign was peculiarly appropriate to this occasion, especially so far as his preaching repentance to the Ninevites was a sign. **And he left them.** There was nothing more that he could do for these men. He could only wait and let the seeds of truth he had planted in their minds spring up if they would let them.

II. THE LEAVEN OF THE PHARISEES, vers. 5–12.

TIME. Immediately after the above.

PLACE. In a boat on the Sea of Galilee.

PARALLEL. Mark 8:14–21.

5. **When his disciples were come to the other side**, to Bethsaida (Mark 8:22). As they drew near to and had practically reached their destination, they became aware that **they had forgotten to take bread**, the round flat loaves they were accustomed to carry. They had only one of these small loaves (Mark). "Three were not too much for a meal for one person." Apparently they had not yet left the boat (Mark).

6. **Then Jesus**, as usual taking every opportunity to teach a lesson from present events.

Take heed and beware of the leaven of the Pharisees. For leaven, see on 13:33. The leaven was their teaching (ver. 12), both by word and by example. Leaven is the type of an active, pervasive influence, whether for good or bad. The leaven of the Pharisees was their general spirit and character, manifested in hypocrisy, pride, ceremonialism, blindness to the truth, prejudice, selfishness, and the like. **And of the Sadducees.** Mark calls them Herodians, — the court party. "The leaven of Herod was worldliness (and skepticism). The Herods were professed Jews, who sought to leaven Judaism with

7 And they reasoned among themselves, saying, *It is* because we have taken / We took no bread.
8 *Which* when / And [g] Jē′ṣus perceived, he / perceiving it said, unto them, [h] O ye of little faith, why reason ye
among yourselves, because ye have brought no bread?
9 [i] Do ye not yet understand, / perceive, neither remember the [j] five loaves of the five thou-
sand, and how many baskets ye took up?
10 Neither [k] the seven loaves of the four thousand, and how many baskets ye
took up?
11 How is it that ye do not understand / perceive that I spake *it* not to you concerning
bread? that ye should / But [e] beware of the leaven of the Phăr′ĭ-seeṣ and of the Săd′du-
çeeṣ?
12 [l] Then understood they how that he bade *them* / them not beware of the leaven of
bread, but of [m] the doctrine / teaching of the Phăr′ĭ-seeṣ and of the Săd′du-çeeṣ.

g ch. 26. 10. *h* See ch. 6. 30. *i* ch. 15. 16. *j* ch. 14. 17–21. *k* ch. 15. 34–38. *l* ch. 17. 13. *m* Cp. ch. 5. 20 & 23. 3.

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the customs of heathenism. They represented the escape from the rigors and scruples of Pharisaism into the license and irreligion of the world, instead of into the freedom of a spiritual religion. But the escape from spiritual blindness does not lie that way."[1] "The leaven of Herod was doubtless the practical unbelief which springs from a love of the world, and the immoralities to which in a coarser world it led."[2]

7. **They reasoned . . . It is because we have taken no bread.** They were not quick to see the spiritual truth, and understand Jesus' illustration. Leaven suggested bread, and the danger of contamination from food to be obtained of the Pharisees. They must not obtain their supplies from those who had shown themselves so unworthy by their treatment of Jesus.

8. **O ye of little faith.** (1) Of little spiritual perception, the insight into spiritual things which faith gives (see Hebrews 11: 1–3); (2) of feeble trust in me and my power to supply your needs, as is implied by what follows. The kinds of faith interacted on each other.

9. **Do ye not yet understand** the meaning of the miracles you have lately witnessed, and that I can always supply your needs? **Baskets.** The same word, κοφίνους, is used for baskets here as in the record of the miracle; and ver. 10, the same word, σπυρίδας, as is used in the record of the feeding of the 4000.

12. **Beware . . . of the doctrine,** the teaching. What they taught, the method and spirit of their teaching, and the teaching of their lives and conduct. All this was diametrically opposed to the teachings of Jesus, and of the kingdom of heaven.

NOTE. Between this verse and the next occurs the visit of Jesus to Jerusalem at the Feast of Tabernacles (Oct. 11–18) and the events described in chapters 7, 8, 9, and 10: 1–21, of John.

SECTION XV. — REVELATION OF THE SUFFERING MESSIAH, 16: 13–28.

A distinct stage of development in the teaching of Jesus, and the training of the Twelve.

1. THE SETTLED FAITH OF THE DISCIPLES THAT JESUS WAS THE MESSIAH, vers. 13–17.
2. THE ROCK AND THE KEYS, vers. 18–20.
3. A FURTHER REVELATION, — THAT THE MESSIAH MUST DIE AND BE RAISED AGAIN, vers. 21–23.
4. THE GENERAL PRINCIPLE INVOLVED, vers. 24–28.

Time.

Autumn, A. D. 29.

Place.

Cesarea Philippi.

I. THE SETTLED FAITH OF THE DISCIPLES THAT JESUS WAS THE MESSIAH, vers. 13–17.

PARALLEL. Mark 8: 27–30; Luke 9: 18–21.

THE NEW EPOCH. This journey marks a turning point or new epoch in the education of the disciples. They are drawing toward a great crisis. It is only six months before the crucifixion and resurrection, which end Jesus' visible earthly career. For these events and the great changes

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[1] *Int. Crit. Com.*

[2] Prof. Swete.

13 ¶ [n] When / Now when Jē′ṣus came into the coasts / parts of Çæs-a̯-rē′ȧ Phĭ-lĭp′pī, he asked his disciples, saying, Whom / Who do men say that [I] the Son of man am? / is?

14 And they said, Some *say* *that thou art* [o] Jŏhn the Băp′tĭst; some, [p] E-li′as; / E-li′jah: and others, Jer-e-mi′as, / Jer-e-mi′ah, or one of the prophets.

15 He saith unto them, But whom / who say ye that I am?

16 And Sī′mon Pē′tĕr answered and said, [q] Thou art [r] the Chrīst, [s] the Son of [t] the living God.

17 And Jē′ṣus answered and said unto him, [u] Blessed art thou, [v] Sī′mon Bar-jo′na: / Bar-Jo′nah: for [w] flesh and blood hath not revealed *it* / it unto thee, [x] but my Father which is in heaven.

n For vers. 13–16, see Mark 8. 27–29 & Luke 9. 18–20. *o* ch. 14. 2. Mark 6. 14. Luke 9. 7. *p* Mark 6. 15. Luke 9. 8. Cp. ch. 17. 10 & Mark 9. 11 & John 1. 21. *q* John 11. 27. *r* See ch. 1. 17. *s* See ch. 14. 33. *t* Deut. 5. 26. Josh. 3. 10. Ps. 42. 2. Jer. 10. 10. Dan. 6. 20. Hos. 1. 10. Acts 14. 15. 2 Cor. 3. 3. 1 Tim. 4. 10. Heb. 3. 12, *al.* *u* Cp. ch. 13. 16. *v* Cp. John 1. 42 & 21. 15–17. *w* 1 Cor. 15. 50. Gal. 1. 16. Eph. 6. 12. Heb. 2. 14. *x* 1 Cor. 2. 10 & 12. 3. Cp. ch. 11. 25 & John 6. 45.

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they must make, the disciples must be prepared. Hence Jesus reveals to them more clearly his nature as the Messiah, and the nature of his kingdom, and for the first time shows them the necessity of his sufferings and death, first by his teachings, and then by the transfiguration scene. He also begins the organized church, — lays the first stones of the structure upon the great bedrock foundation.

13. **When Jesus came**, from Bethsaida, where the disciples landed with insufficient bread (Mark 8:22), on his way northward along the road that runs east of the Jordan to **the coasts**, parts, district, "the region belonging to a city, the country around it." Mark says "to the villages" **of Cæsarea Philippi. He asked his disciples**, after he had been praying alone (Luke). As usual, the great epoch, the new work, began in prayer. His object seems to have been to draw out the faith of his disciples, and to reveal to them more fully his nature and his redeeming work. **Whom** (in modern English "who," as in R. V.) **do men say that I the Son of man am?** The Son of man was a title he frequently applied to himself (see also Dan. 7:13, 14), but it is never applied to him by the apostles. It expressed his human, visible side, as the representative man, "the founder and ruler of the kingdom of God." Who do men say that I, who appear as a man, am?

14. **Some say . . . John the Baptist** returned to life. Among these was Herod (Matt. 14:1, 2). **Some, Elias** (Greek form of Elijah), who had wrought some great miracles, and had turned the tide of the nation from heathen worship to the true God, and was the promised forerunner of the Messiah (Mal. 4:5, 6). **And others, Jeremias**, the Greek form of Jeremiah. "Jeremiah is placed first, because in the Jewish canon he was placed first among the Old Testament prophets." **Or one of the prophets**, *i. e.*, "that one of the *old prophets is risen again*" (Luke 9:19).

15. **But whom** (R. V., "who") **say ye that I am?** Observe "ye," plural, and by position in the Greek exceedingly emphatic — in contrast with the discordant popular opinions. What have you learned about me and my work during the two or three years you have known me? What is the outcome of it all?

16. **And Simon Peter answered.** The question is addressed to all, and Peter, according to his natural boldness, answers for all. **Thou art the Christ.** The expected Messiah for whom the people were looking and hoping. "Christ" is the Greek, and "Messiah" is the Hebrew, for "anointed." Anointing was the method by which kings, and sometimes prophets, were set apart for their work. **The Son of the living God.** The *Son of God* in the highest sense, which could be asserted of no other being. God is here styled *living* "because he is the source of true life, and suggests that his Son is the fountain of life to men."[1]

17. **Blessed art thou.** Because thou hast opened thy heart to the truth; because thou hast broken from the bondage of Jewish prejudice and worldly vision; because thou hast such firm confidence in such a Saviour. Faith, knowledge of Christ as the Son of God, almighty to save and infinite in love; a heart in which truth finds a natural soil; a character in harmony with Jesus; broader outlooks into truth — are all exquisite blessings. **Simon Bar-jona**, *i. e.*, son of Jonah. *Bar* is Aramaic (the Syriac Hebrew then in use) for "son." Jonah should begin with a capital J, as in the R. V. **For flesh and blood** (man) **hath not revealed** this unto you. It has not its origin in the mere human knowledge, in the

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[1] Prof. Riddle.

18 And I [say also / also say] unto thee, [That / that] [y]thou art Pē'tĕr, and [z]upon this rock I will build my church; and [a]the gates of [b][hell / Ha'des] shall not prevail against it.

y Cp. ch. 10. 2 & John 1. 42. *z* Eph. 2. 20. Rev. 21. 14. Cp. ch. 7. 24. *a* Job 38. 17. Isai. 38. 10. *b* See ch. 11. 23.

workings of the human mind. **But my Father which is in heaven.** God flashed forth the truth, and Peter did not close his eyes that he might not see. Thus the disciples had learned the lesson of the Messiah, and were firmly fixed in that faith. They had reached a positive stage in their training. The foundation was laid, and firm. Standing on this they could go on to larger, more important, and more difficult truths, without losing their faith.

PRACTICAL SUGGESTIONS. (1.) Note the value of open confession. It required great courage for Peter thus to confess a truth contrary to the trend of public opinion. But such confession confirms one's faith, makes clearer the truth, and strengthens one's loyalty. Like Cortez, it burns one's ships behind him. It changes the soft clay into rock.

(2.) The discussion concerning Christ and his claims, by the people, even when they were only questioning about it, or opposing the truth, was a great advantage. It awakened thought; it prepared people to receive the truth; it made widely known the claims of Jesus, and the proofs he gave for his claims. All discussions are liable to evil, but there are none so evil as deadness of mind and heart. Weeds are bad, but not so bad as a desert. Storms are dangerous, but none so dangerous as the level stillness of a frozen sea.

(3.) WHAT THINK YE OF CHRIST? is the most important question for us. It is the crucial question of our religious life, which will measure its height, its power, its comfort, its quality. Christ as a prophet, as a great teacher, as a noble example, is of great value to us in many ways. But Christ as the atoning Redeemer, as the revealer of God's forgiving love, as the infinite Son of God, with all knowledge of the present and the future, with all power to save and help, everywhere present, — such a Christ is vastly more helpful and comforting. As Dr. Holland says, "The mightier the Christ of a church is, the mightier the church as an influence for good in the world."

(4.) The disciples had gradually come to this view of Jesus. While the people thought of him only as a prophet, for they saw nothing kingly in his appearance or works, no crown, no sceptre, no throne, no army, no treasures, no retinue of princes, the disciples had begun to see more deeply into his inner nature. They received his teachings, they saw his mighty works, they felt his spiritual power, and at length recognized him as the Messiah.

II. THE ROCK AND THE KEYS, vers. 18–20.

Although their understanding of the Messiah and his kingdom was very imperfect, yet Jesus showed them how great was the trust committed to them, and how heavy the responsibilities laid upon them. This was a part of their training. It would give them a deep interest in the subject, and lead to a more earnest search after the truth.

18. **Thou art Peter.** Greek, *Petros*, a stone, a piece of rock, "as in Homer, of Ajax throwing a stone at Hector (*Iliad*, VII. 270)."[1] This name was given to Peter in prophecy long before (John 1 : 42), and now attention is called to its meaning. What was possible rock at first was hardening into actual rock, as sandstone in the isle of Skye, and building stone in some of the Ohio quarries, are soft and flexible and easily carved when first taken from the earth, but soon harden into rock. Even precious stones like chalcedony have the same quality.

Upon this rock. *Petra*, the feminine of *Petros*, denoting rock, bed-rock, as distinguished from a stone or piece of rock, of which Peter was a fragment. "In Homer (*Odyssey*, IX. 243), the rock which Polyphemus places at the door of his cavern is a mass which two and twenty wagons could not remove.[1] **I will build my church.** "The ideal congregation, or assembly of all real Christians," is the great spiritual temple planned and built by God, not by man. Not human organizations, but the one great building in which God dwells by his spirit. Jesus Christ is the builder, the architect. Peter, as one of the apostles, and a representative of all, filled with living experience and faith in Jesus as the Messiah, the Son of the living God, is a rock, one of the great foundation stones on which Christ is rearing the building, his enduring and glorious church. (Compare Eph. 2 : 20; Rev. 21 : 14.) In the language of the Prayer Book, "All true Christians dispersed throughout the world," "all who in every place call on the name of the Lord Jesus Christ, both theirs and ours."[2]

And the gates of hell. Gates of Hades, which is composed of the Greek ἀ, not, and ἰδεῖν, to see, and signifies *the invisible land, the realm of the dead, Death* personified. *The gates*, being the place where business was often transacted and assem-

[1] Prof. Vincent.

[2] See Farrar's *Life of Lives*, "The Apostolic Commission."

19 And I will give unto thee [c] the keys of the kingdom of heaven: and [d] whatsoever thou shalt bind on earth shall be bound in heaven: and whatsoever thou shalt loose on earth shall be loosed in heaven.

20 [e] Then charged he his disciples that they should tell no man that he was Jesus the Christ.

c Cp. Isai. 22. 22 & Wisd. 16. 13 & Rev. 1. 18 & 3. 7. d Cp. ch. 18. 18 & John 20. 23. e Mark 8. 30. Luke 9. 21. Cp. ch. 17. 9. See ch. 12. 16.

blies held, "is an Orientalism for the court, throne, power," as "Sublime Porte," *i. e.*, sublime gate, designates the Turkish government. The realm, the kingdom, the city of death, confronts and assaults the church, the kingdom, the city of Christ, but **shall not prevail against it.** Church forms and organizations may change and be superseded by better ones, but the real church abides forever. It is indestructible.[1]

19. **I will give unto thee.** As one of the chiefest of the apostles, the first among equals. The others were included, as Peter had nothing in kind that the rest did not have (Matt. 18: 18; John 20: 23). In Rev. 21: 14 the twelve apostles are twelve foundation stones of the heavenly city. (See, also, Eph. 2: 20.) "The keys, the powers to loose and bind, the power to remit and retain sin, refer neither to individual priests nor to sacerdotal caste, but to the didactic, the legislative, and the prophetic powers *of the whole church of God.*"[2] **The keys of the kingdom of heaven.** *The keys* are the means by which one enters a house, a city, or a treasury. *The kingdom of heaven*, not the abode of the blest but the kingdom of God on earth, is represented under the figure of a city with gates, or of a large house with gates for entrance, and doors to treasure rooms.

First. Peter and the other apostles were the instruments through which the world was to be brought into the kingdom. For instance, on the day of Pentecost through Peter's preaching three thousand persons entered the kingdom in one day. And through the testimony of the apostles, their work, and the Scriptures they wrote, all that have become Christians have come into the kingdom.

Second. Since the church could not be organized or the full Gospel preached till after the death and resurrection of Jesus, he must have some authoritative representatives on earth to whom, under the guidance of the Holy Spirit, could be committed the decision of all questions and interpretations that would necessarily arise. To none could this power be so justly committed as to those devoted persons who had been trained under Jesus himself, and specially endowed with the Holy Spirit. Hence, Jesus says, as one use of the power of the keys: **Whatsoever thou shalt bind on earth.** That is, forbid or declare forbidden, enforce the obligation. **Shall be bound in heaven.** Their decisions should be ratified and confirmed by Jesus in heaven and by the Holy Spirit. **Shalt loose on earth.** That is, allow, declare to be permitted, "to remove the yoke of some traditional precept." "This power was a familiar Jewish metaphor of the day."

Examples. This power was used by the apostles and the early church. For instance, the election of an apostle in the place of Judas (Acts 1: 21-26); the appointment of deacons (Acts 6: 2-5); the admission of Gentiles into the church (Acts 10); the decision whether the Gentiles must conform to Jewish rites (Acts 15).

Third. They received the key to the interpretation of the Old Testament Scriptures.

Fourth. It gave them the key to the treasure house of gospel knowledge. It was through their witness and preaching that we have the Gospels and the rest of the New Testament, which are the authoritative rule of the church in all ages.

Practical. (1) The gift of the keys is widely bestowed upon man. God has bestowed upon him the keys of nature, as to a house with numberless doors, and bids him open them. Science and civilization are the results of the use of this power of the keys. Not so much knowledge as the power to learn is God's gift to men. "It is an awful responsibility, but it is a magnificent trust." But the process of learning the use of the keys has been "worth far more than all else which civilization has brought." In the same way and for the same purpose "God gives to each soul personally the keys of his own destiny and bids him unlock life's closed doors; puts in his hands the rudder and bids him steer his bark; gives him the tools and bids him model his own character. This is the solemnest fact of all."[3] (2) Every experience is a key to unlock the hearts of others that the truth may enter in.

20. **Then charged he his disciples that they should tell no man that he was . . . the Christ.** Omit **Jesus**, or read, *that he, Jesus, was the Christ.* Why not proclaim this glorious truth from the housetops? (1) Because the time had not come. After his death they should proclaim

[1] Compare the scene in the Interpreter's house in *Pilgrim's Progress*, where Satan is trying to put out the fire.

[2] See Farrar's *Life of Lives*, "The Apostolic Commission."

[3] Lyman Abbott.

21 ¶ [f] From that time [forth] began [g] Jē′sus to shew unto his disciples, how that [h] he must go unto Jĕ-rū′sā-lĕm, and [i] suffer many things of the elders and chief priests and scribes, and be killed, and [be raised again] [j] the third day. [be raised up.]

22 [Then And] Pē′tĕr took him, and began to rebuke him, saying, [k] Be it far from thee, Lord: this shall [not never] be unto thee.

23 But he turned, and said unto Pē′tĕr, [l] Get thee behind me, Sā′tan: thou art [m] [an offence a stumblingblock] unto me: for thou [n] [savourest mindest] not the things [that be] of God, but [those that be the things] of men.

f For ver. 21–28, see Mark 8. 31–9. 1 & Luke 9. 22–27. Cp. ch. 17. 12, 22, 23 & 20. 17–19. *g* See ch. 1. 18 (for mg.). *h* ch. 20. 18. Cp. Luke 13. 33. *i* ch. 17. 12, 22, 23. Luke 24. 7. *j* See ch. 27. 63 & John 2. 19. *k* 1 Macc. 2. 21 (Gk.). *l* Cp. ch. 4. 10. *m* See ch. 13. 41. *n* Rom. 8. 5. Phil. 3. 19. Col. 3. 2. Cp. Phil. 2. 5.

it all the rest of their lives, but not at this time, for they themselves did not understand the true nature and work of the Messiah. They would be certain to preach wrong. (2) Because the people would be turned away from their spiritual needs, and the new life which was essential to the coming of the kingdom, to the desire to realize the outward glories of their false conception of the Messiah as king. This danger was entirely removed after the crucifixion. (3) The announcement that Jesus was the Messiah would be likely to excite tumult and rebellion against the Roman government, the people trying to make Jesus the leader of the revolt. This would interfere with his plan of a spiritual kingdom.

Although the apostles accepted Jesus as the Messiah, yet they had much to learn about him and his kingdom. The spiritual nature of the kingdom and the spiritual conditions of admission were only dimly within their horizon. In their vision of the promised glories there was no room for other prophecies concerning the Messiah, which were essential to the realization of the kingdom and the Messiah they expected.

III. A NEW REVELATION CONCERNING THE MESSIAH, vers. 21–23.

21. **From that time.** The disciples were now strong enough in their conviction that Jesus was the Messiah, to have their errors concerning his nature and kingdom corrected. Another view must be brought to their minds, which would show them that the kingdom was spiritual and not earthly. **How . . . he must go unto Jerusalem.** The capital of the Jewish nation, the symbol of the Church, the place of the Temple, and its sacrifices which he had come to fulfil. **Suffer many things,** as described in the last chapters of the Gospel. **And be killed,** by crucifixion, thus making the atoning sacrifice for the sins of the world. This is stated to guard the disciples from being disappointed when this necessary event took place, and thus losing faith in him as the Messiah. They must see it as an essential part of the plan of salvation. **And be raised again the third day.** The resurrection of Jesus was essential to the proof that he was the true Messiah, essential to his work of redemption, and reigning as king at the right hand of God (1 Cor. 15 : 14–18). This is stated in each of the three accounts, and is emphasized for the sake of the faith and hope of the disciples. It was an enigma to them as yet, but its solution would be the corner stone of their future faith.

22. **Then Peter took him** one side to speak to him privately. **And began to rebuke him.** Only began, for he was soon interrupted. His was a mingled motive of love and self-assurance that he was right. **Saying, Be it far from thee, Lord.** The plan of redemption outlined by Jesus was so contrary to all Peter's expectations and hopes, so opposite to his idea of the Messiah king and his reign, that it seemed inconceivable to Peter. It was absurd, ruinous, a deathblow to their own hopes and a triumph to their enemies.

23. **But he turned.** Turned round to the disciples (Mark 8 : 33). **And said unto Peter.** Publicly before them all. **Get thee behind me, Satan.** Satan means "adversary," the great "enemy" of all good, used in the Saviour's time as a proper name. "He did not call his apostle *Satan*, a *devil*, but he looked for the moment through Peter, and saw behind him his old enemy, cunningly making use of the prejudices and impulsive honesty of the undeveloped apostle."[1] **Thou art an offence.** A stumbling-block instead of a foundation stone; a hindrance, by placing before him the very temptation which Satan had presented to him in the wilderness. **For thou savourest** (mindest, "partakest of the quality of") **not the things that be of God.** God's wise plan for his kingdom. **But those that be of men.** The natural, human view of the Messiah, a worldly kingdom, riches, honor, glory, and triumph. There ever has been, and still exists, a tendency to fall into Peter's error,

[1] Morison.

24 ¶ Then said Jē'sus unto his disciples, If any *man* will would come after me, let him *o* deny himself, and *p* take up his cross, and follow me.

25 For *p* whosoever will would save his life shall lose it: and whosoever will shall lose his life for my sake shall find it.

26 For *q* what shall 18 a man be profited, if he shall gain the whole world, and lose forfeit his own soul life? or *r* what shall a man give in exchange for his soul life?

o Cp. 2 Tim. 2. 12, 13. *p* See ch. 10. 38, 39. *q* Cp. Luke 12. 20. *r* Cp. Ps. 49. 7, 8.

and seek the growth of the church by temporal power and worldly wealth and greatness, instead of by suffering for the world.

Amid all their visions of the splendors of the Messiah's kingdom, and the grandeur of his triumphs over his enemies, their highest dreams and brightest visions fell as far short of the reality as modern Jerusalem falls short of the new Jerusalem portrayed in Revelation.

THE CROSS of Christ is the central point of the Gospel, the source of its power. "The cross, stained with the blood drops of our Redeemer is the most sacred symbol of our religion. But it is precious, not because it points downward to death and the grave, but because it ever points upward to the living Christ."[1]

IV. THE GENERAL PRINCIPLE INVOLVED, vers. 24–28.

Those who belong to the Messiah's kingdom must bear the cross, like the Messiah, with its resurrection to a new and glorious life.

24. **If any man will** (would, wishes to) **come after me.** Be his follower, his disciple; and seek to attain his character and his reward. **Let him deny himself.** Renounce self as master and accept Christ as master. When the heart accepts Jesus and chooses God, then the whole lower nature, all passions, aims, desires, are to be subjected not only to conscience, but to Jesus. Our mere pains and troubles are not sweet incense to God (2 Tim. 4: 1–3). He desires us to be happy as he is, and he knows that only through true self-denial can this joy be obtained. Self-denial is to deny ourselves everything wrong, no matter how pleasant it may be; it is to give up what is pleasant and right in itself when we can thereby best aid the cause of Christ and the redemption of our fellow men; it is to do right, to serve Christ, to promote his kingdom at whatever cost; it is to make Christ first. Self-denial is the condition without which no high character can be attained. It is the process of training and educating the soul. Even he who would have the best health and strength of body must continually deny himself, as every athlete knows. No man can gain the higher without denying self in the lower. "Keep your soul on top." Hence God has made life full of opportunities to deny self for others. **Take up his cross.** Daily, not merely on special occasions. The cross is the symbol of self-denial even to death. Each one must take up his own cross. He must take it up voluntarily, not merely because it is forced upon him. The cross is a test, like Ithuriel's spear.[2] **And follow me.** To follow Christ is to take him for our master, our teacher, our example; to believe his doctrines, to uphold his cause, to obey his precepts, and to do this though it lead us by the way of the cross. It is not merely to do right, but to do right for his sake, under his leadership, and according to his teaching.

25. **For whosoever will save his life.** Wishes, wills to save it, by doing wrong, by avoiding hard duties and self-denial, by gaining worldly good at the expense of religion and righteousness. **Shall lose it.** Shall utterly fail, shall lose even the earthly rewards he seeks, and his eternal blessedness. *Life* is the same word as *soul* in the next verse. It is the man himself, and all that in his eyes makes life worth living. **And whosoever will lose his life.** The lower life, the things that seem to worldly men to make life worth living. But note this is to be for my sake, "and," Mark adds, "for the gospel's." The mere loss of life has no promised blessing. It is only loss for the sake of Christ that has this promise. Multitudes of people lose their lives for gain, for pleasure, for fashion. Each of these has more martyrs than the cross ever required; but the loss was without compensation or hope. But whosoever loses it for the love of Christ, for the sake of preaching and advancing the gospel, **shall find it.** Shall have a blessedness and glory which will a thousand times compensate for every loss. The loss was temporal, the gain is eternal; the loss was small, the gain infinite; the loss was of outward things, the gain is in the nature of the soul itself.[3]

26. **For what is a man profited, if he shall gain the whole world** (which he never does), **and lose his own soul?** "Soul" here is the same word in the original as "life" in the previous verse. All that makes it possible for him

[1] Prof. Charles L. Briggs, LL. D.

[2] See *The Changed Cross* and *The Cross-Bearer*, a series of pictures on different ways of bearing the cross.

[3] The Seven Fears changed into Seven Joys, in Arnold's *Light of Asia*.

27 *s* For the Son of man shall come in the glory of his Father with *t* his angels; and *u* then (he shall reward / shall he render unto) every man according to his (works. / deeds.)

28 Verily I say unto you, There be some (standing / of them that stand) here, which shall (not / in no wise) *v* taste of death, *w* till they see the Son of man *x* coming in his kingdom.

s ch. 24. 30 & 25. 31 & 26. 64. Dan. 7. 10, 13. Zech. 14. 5. John 1. 51. Acts 1. 11. 1 Thess. 1. 10 & 4. 16. Jude 14. Rev. 1. 7. Cp. Deut. 33. 2. *t* ch. 13. 41. *u* Rom. 2. 6 & 14. 12. 2 Cor. 5. 10. Heb. 9. 27. 1 Pet. 1. 17. Rev. 2. 23 & 20. 12 & 22. 12. See Acts 10. 42 & 1 Cor. 3. 8. *v* John 8. 52. Heb. 2. 9. *w* Cp. ch. 10. 23 & 23. 36 & 24. 34. *x* Luke 23. 42.

to use or enjoy the world he has gained. What good do worldly things do to one who is sick, or suffers the stings of conscience, or destroys the character which makes heaven possible to him? **What shall a man give in exchange for his soul?** R. V., "his life." Life physical or spiritual, earthly or heavenly.[1]

27. **For the Son of man shall come in the glory of his Father.** The time is coming when all these days of humiliation and the cross will pass away, and Jesus shall be a triumphant king. He shall conquer death by the resurrection. The kingdom which seemed so feeble then shall rule over the whole earth. **With his angels.** A glorious retinue of the most glorious beings in the universe, indicating his rank as King of kings. **He shall reward every man according to his works.** Because the works are the index and proof of the character, as the time the hands keep on the face of the clock are the test of the perfection of the unseen works within. He who was condemned then shall be the judge, honest and true. The "Well done" will be spoken only to those who have done well; and "Enter into the joy of your Lord" only to those who have been faithful to their Lord.

28. **There be some standing here, etc.** There were some before him who would **not taste of death** till they saw the beginnings of this triumph, the establishment of the new kingdom. **The Son of man coming in his kingdom.** This statement is three times repeated (see Mark 9: 1; Luke 9: 27). The apostles lived to see the marvellous day of Pentecost, when Christ began to come in his kingdom, and three thousand were converted in a day; and some of them to see the end of the Jewish dispensation in the destruction of Jerusalem, and the establishment of the Christian dispensation with tens of thousands of disciples throughout the civilized world. "'This generation' (Mark) is always used by Jesus to denote the men living at the time."[2] These events were the beginning of the second coming of Christ. Christ is here now in person. And the full coming of the kingdom of God is certain, because it has begun to come. The dawning rays are the assurance of hope and faith. The past is the proof of the future.

CHAPTER 17.

SECTION XVI.—THE TRANSFIGURATION, vers. 1–13.

1. THE PRAYER-MEETING ON THE MOUNTAIN.
2. JESUS TRANSFIGURED.
3. CONFERENCE OF THREE GLORIFIED ONES.
4. THE THREE WITNESSES.
5. THE DIVINE TESTIMONY.
6. LESSONS FROM THE TRANSFIGURATION.

SECTION XVII.—FINAL INSTRUCTIONS OF THE GALILEAN MINISTRY (in part).

1. THE LUNATIC CHILD, vers. 14–18.
2. LESSON ON FAITH, vers. 19–21.
3. THE SUFFERING MESSIAH (repeated), vers. 22, 23.
4. THE TRIBUTE MONEY, vers. 24, 27.

THE TRANSFIGURATION, vers. 1–13.

TIME. Autumn of A. D. 29, six days after the discourse in chap. 16.

PLACE. Probably Mount Hermon, or one of its spurs, in the vicinity of Cesarea Philippi, where Jesus and his disciples were the week before. So

[1] There is a Russian legend of one who entered a diamond mine in search of great riches. He filled his pockets with great gems, and then threw them away to make room for larger ones. At length he became very thirsty, but there was no water. He sought to find the way out, but was hopelessly lost in the intricate mazes. He heard the flow of rivers, but they were rivers of gems; and he hastened forward at the sound of a waterfall, but it was a cascade of jewels. He was very rich in precious stones, but he was dying of thirst, and his riches were worse than useless. He had lost himself and perished amid his treasures. Douglas Jerrold's *Cakes and Ale* has a story of a miser who perished by being locked up in his own treasury. Goethe's *Faust*.

[2] *Int. Crit. Com.*

1 ¶ And after six days Jē'sus taketh with him [z] Pē'tēr, and Jāmes, and John his brother, and bringeth them up into an high mountain apart:

y For ver. 1–8, see Mark 9. 2–8 & Luke 9. 28–36. z ch. 26. 37. Mark 5. 37.

most modern scholars; though a tradition dating from before the fourth century places it on Mount Tabor in Galilee.

Parallels. Mark 9: 2–13; Luke 9: 28–36.

Raphael's Last Picture. The most celebrated and the most beautiful picture of the Transfiguration is Raphael's, now in the Vatican. It is one of the greatest pictures ever painted. Its well-known story is of great interest. It was Raphael's last work, on which he spent years of study, and was not quite finished when he died. "While he was sick he had the picture hung in his sight, that his constant thoughts might be upon his glorified Saviour. When he was dead, the picture was hung above his lifeless body, where for days crowds came to honor his wonderful genius, as they looked with reverence at the dead artist and his wonderful picture of the transfiguration of Jesus." [1]

I. THE PRAYER MEETING ON THE MOUNTAIN.

1. **And after six days.** Six complete days. Luke counts the parts of days before and after these six. It was a week after the announcement that Jesus must die, but would be raised again. There was a close connection between "those sayings" and the transfiguration. The revelation of the way Jesus must act his part as the Messiah, and that they must share a cross instead of a throne, threw them into the gloom of the dungeon of Giant Despair. It may be, too, that the prospect of death shadowed his own spirit, and that Ruskin is right in attributing to Jesus all natural human feelings, including the fear of death, "since among all the trials of earth none spring from the dust more terrible than fear." [2] Hence this wonderful revelation of the divine nature of Jesus, — of his real glory, of the fact of a life after death, and of heavenly interest in him and his work, showing how the great prophets understood that Jesus could be King and Messiah only by passing through the gates of death, — was necessary in order to revive the faith of the disciples, and enable them to see how Jesus could die and yet be the Messiah.

Jesus taketh Peter, James, and John. It was the same favored three who had gone with Jesus into the room where he raised Jairus' daughter. A few months later they were nearest to him as he prayed in Gethsemane, and still later were recognized as "pillars" of the church (Gal. 2: 9). There was no favoritism in this selection. He simply advanced to higher studies those who, by faithfulness in the lower, had made it possible for them to understand and use the higher. Only to those who have been faithful in the lesser things comes the call to the wider kingdom. The other nine disciples were left at the base of the mountain, as we see by the events of the following morning (Mark 9: 14–29). They did not have faith enough to cure a vexed lunatic, although Jesus had conferred this power upon them (10: 1).

Reasons. (1) Jesus wanted sympathy, and these three could best give it. (2) There was need of witnesses to report this scene in due time. (3) And these three best scholars needed the knowledge and training this event would give.

Into an high mountain apart. "Far from the madding crowd." "Scholars are coming to the unanimous conclusion that the mountain was Hermon," whose top is nine thousand feet above the sea. Dr. Wm. Wright says that he has spent twenty nights on its top, sometimes alone, and once twenty-five men and one woman spent the night there with him in "a picnic and prayer-meeting." On the top is an irregular angular space, four hundred or five hundred yards from edge to edge, surrounded by a jagged fence of broken rocks. "There is not another spot on earth so fitted for the transfiguration scene as that plateau, the loftiest place on earth known to the men of the Bible; the land of Israel spread out below, and the vast kingdoms of the world hemming it round."

Luke (9: 28, 29) tells us that Jesus went up into the mountain to pray; and that the Transfiguration took place *while he prayed*. So it was at his baptism; *as he prayed* the heavens were opened and the Holy Spirit descended upon him as a dove (Luke 3: 21, 22). Not long before, at the feeding of the 5000, he had spent the night hours in a mountain alone, praying. He prayed when he chose the Twelve, at the institution of his supper, in Gethsemane, and on the cross. Thus ever at special crises of his ministry. This may have been one of the times when "in the days of his flesh he offered up prayers and supplications, with strong crying and tears" (Heb. 5: 7). In this case there was not merely prayer, but a prayer-meeting. Doubtless the three disciples joined with their teacher in prayer. And to this prayer-meeting of four was the promise fulfilled that "where two or three are gathered together in my name, there am I in the midst of them" (18: 19).

[1] Faith Latimer.

[2] *Modern Painters*, vol. iv. chap. xx.

2 And and he was [a] transfigured before them: and [b] his face did shine as the sun, and [c] his raiment was garments became white as the light.

3 And behold, there appeared unto them Mō′ṣeṣ and E-li′as E-li′jah talking with him.

a Cp. 2 Cor. 3. 18 (Gk.). *b* Rev. 1. 16 & 10. 1. *c* Dan. 7. 9. Cp. ch. 28. 3 & Ps. 104. 2.

II. JESUS TRANSFIGURED.

2. During his praying (Luke) and in answer to his prayer, he **was transfigured before them**, "μετεμορφώθη, from μετά, denoting *change* or *transfer*, and μορφή, *form*, regarded as *the distinctive nature and character of the object*, and is distinguished from σχῆμα, the changeable *outward fashion*. The word implies not merely a change of outward form, as when Satan took the appearance of an angel of light, but a real essential change. 'A foreshadowing or prophecy of his true form — his distinctive character — comes out in his transfiguration;' 'a revelation of Deity breaking out in that glorified face appealed to something deeper than sense.'" [1]

And his face did shine as the sun. "The fashion (appearance) of his countenance was altered" (Luke). Nothing less than the brightest and most glorious of all objects within human knowledge — so bright that it destroys the eye to gaze directly upon it — could express the radiant glories of Jesus' face, when his heavenly nature shone through the veil of his flesh, — one of the few hints as to our resurrection bodies. Compare the description of Jesus in Acts 9: 3 and in Rev. 1: 16, and the shining of Moses' face when he came down from talking with God (Ex. 34: 29), and of Stephen's face (Acts 6: 15). It was his inner spirit shining through the veil of the flesh, with "a light that never was on sea or land." Jesus was a prince in disguise, and for once he threw off his outward guise and appeared in his own royal glory. Dante, describing the angels he met in Paradise, says: —

> "Another of those splendors
> Approached me, and its will to pleasure me
> It signified by brightening outwardly,
> As one delighted to do good;
> Became a thing transplendent in my sight,
> As a fine ruby smitten by the sun." [2]

And his raiment was white as the light, *i. e.*, luminously white, "as no fuller on earth can white them" (Mark); *i. e.*, with a supernatural whiteness; "white and glistering" (Luke). Literally, *lightening forth*, as though from some inward radiance. "A light within a marble bust produces an effect no light without it can rival." A cathedral window, although divinely pictured, yet seen from without, with the light shining upon it, is a mass of dull stained glass. But when the sun shines through it, we see exquisitely beautiful pictures, forms, and colors with a radiance beyond compare.[3]

III. THE CONFERENCE OF THE THREE GLORIFIED ONES.

3. **And, behold, there appeared unto them** (*i. e.*, the disciples) **Moses and Elias**, the Greek form of *Elijah*. These persons were really present. It was not a vision, as is plain from the account of Luke, who says "two men," human beings; and Peter recognized them. Luke says that they appeared in glory, in their glorified bodies; something like that of the transfigured Jesus, but with less radiance.

Note (1) the peculiarity of the ending of the earthly life of these two, "of whom one had not died (2 Kings 2: 11), and the other had no sooner tasted of death than his body was withdrawn from under the dominion of death and of him that had the power of death" (Deut. 34: 6; Jude 9).[4] And thus with their resurrection bodies they were peculiarly fitted to appear on this occasion as examples of the complete redemption of man, for which Jesus came to the earth.

Note (2) both, like Christ, "had endured a natural fast of forty days and nights; both had been on the holy mount in the visions of God." [5]

Moses was the Representative of the Law. Through him the law was given, and the kingdom founded, and the sacrifices instituted which prefigured the sacrifice of Christ.

Elijah was the Representative of the Prophets, who foretold the coming of the Messiah, his sufferings, and his kingly glory, while he was himself the type of the forerunner.

The Subject of their Conference. **Talking with him.** Of his decease (Luke), of his departure, *exodus* (in the Greek), his going out of this evil world, as the Israelites from the bondage of Egypt. "Departure is a most fitting word, for it contains, at the same time, the ideas both of death and ascension. Ascension was as much the natural way for Jesus as death is for us." This Jesus was about to "accomplish at Jerusalem" (Luke) by being crucified, as he had foretold them just before, and rising again from the dead. (1) This conversation would bring human com-

[1] Prof. M. R. Vincent, *Word Studies*, pp. 99, 100, where is an excellent exposition of the meaning of transfiguration.

[2] *Paradiso*, Canto ix. 13–19.

[3] See the transformation of the fisherman's hut in Goethe's *Tale of Tales;* interpreted by Carlyle in one of his *Essays*. Compare Professor Wilkinson's description of Stephen's face in his *Epic of Saul*.

[4] *Cambridge Bible*.

[5] Alford.

4 Then answered Pe'ter, And Pe'ter answered, and said unto Jē'sus, Lord, it is good for us to be here: if thou wilt, let us I will make here three *d* tabernacles; one for thee, and one for Mō'ses, and one for E-li'as. E-li'jah.

5 While he yet spake, was yet speaking, behold, *e* a bright cloud overshadowed them: and behold, *e* a voice out of the cloud, which said, saying, *f* This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased; *g* hear ye him.

d Cp. Neh. 8. 15. *e* 2 Pet. 1. 17. Cp. Ex. 24. 15, 16. *f* See ch. 3. 17. *g* Acts 3. 22.

fort and strength to Jesus, as he stood seemingly alone in his view of a suffering Messiah, against the almost unanimous opinion of scholars and interpreters of Scripture. The presence of Moses and Elijah, in glorified form, would be a positive assurance to him of his own resurrection. (2) It enabled the disciples to realize that Jesus was divine. It showed them that that which seemed to be destructive of the very existence of the Messiah was, indeed, the central power by which he could become the great king. Their theme was the central theme of the Gospel, — Jesus Christ, and him crucified. It helped them to realize the possibility of the resurrection of Jesus. It showed them how Jesus was fulfilling the Scriptures which foretold and typified the Messiah.

IV. THE THREE WITNESSES.

The three disciples watched this conversation for some time. The late hour, their long vigil, their silent listening made them heavy with sleep, but they had resisted the drowsy influence and kept "fully awake" (R. V. Luke 9: 32). This "is one word in the original, and means *having watched through*, *having remained awake*, for they had overcome the force of sleep."[1] Their reward was that they saw his glory. It was no dream, no mere vision, but a waking reality.

4. **Then answered Peter.** After they had looked on awhile, and the heavenly guests were departing. Peter answered not to any question, but to the feelings and questionings that the scene awakened in his mind. **And said unto Jesus.** Anxious to continue in such heavenly company, but "not knowing what he said" (Luke). He had not time to think what was best, to see all the effects of his plan, and how little it could do toward accomplishing his desire that they should remain and prepare for the inauguration of the glorious Messiah. What if all the Jews could see how glorious was the man who claimed to be the Messiah; how worthy to be the king of the Jews! What if Jesus in his glory should now proclaim his kingdom and begin his Messianic reign!

Lord, it is good for us to be here. Peter spoke the truth. The experience was good, and would make him a better and more useful man all the rest of his life. It widened his outlook. It gave him a new idea of the glory that awaited the faithful. It exalted his knowledge of Jesus as a Saviour. It increased his faith. It enabled him to bear more bravely his burdens. **If thou wilt.** Art willing. **Let us.** The disciples; R.V. says, "I will make." **Make . . . three tabernacles,** or booths, from the bushes on the mountain, like those used at the Feast of Tabernacles, the great annual Jewish Thanksgiving Festival. "They proposed to do what any Galilean peasant would do to-day, if arrested by nightfall on a bleak and exposed hillside. He would at once, rather than travel in the night, look out for brushwood and rushes, and quickly weave a few loose, rough hurdles, to form a screen from the wind."[2]

Jesus made no answer. The events that followed were the answer. It was not good to remain there. There was need of them all in the world below. Working for Jesus was better than standing and gazing at his glory. All that was gained upon the mountain top must be taken down into the sinful, sorrowing world. There the light must shine, for it was sent in order to shine in the darkness.

V. THE DIVINE TESTIMONY TO JESUS, vers. 5–7.

5. **While he yet spake,** was speaking. **A bright cloud.** Like the shekinah in the Tabernacle in the wilderness, and in the Temple when it was dedicated by Solomon, a token of the immediate presence of God; the cloud symbolizing mystery, and the brightness suggesting glory. Peter (2 Pet. 1: 17), in a reminiscence of this scene, calls it "the excellent glory." **Overshadowed them.** Thus Moses and Elijah were hidden from their sight. The cloud was an incarnation of the ineffable light of God, veiling its glory, yet making it visible to man, as the clouds that veil the sun enable us who cannot gaze into his face yet to see his beauty and glory. "Light in its utmost intensity performs the effects of darkness, hides as effectually as the darkness would do." Comp. 1 Tim. 6: 16, and the words of Milton, "dark with excess of light," and of Wordsworth, "a glorious privacy of light."[3]

And behold a voice out of the cloud. "The same voice which had been heard once before at

[1] Thayer, *Gk. Eng. Lex.* [2] Canon Tristram. [3] Trench's *Studies*, pp. 205, 206.

6 And when *h* the disciples heard *it*, *i* they fell on their face, and were sore afraid.

7 And Jē′sus came and *j* touched them, and said, Arise, and *k* be not afraid.

8 And when they had lifted lifting up their eyes, they saw no man, one, save Jē′sus only.

9 *l* And as they were coming came down from the mountain, Jē′sus charged commanded them, saying, *m* Tell the vision to no man, until the Son of man be risen again from the dead.

h 2 Pet. 1. 18. *i* Cp. Gen. 17. 3 & Ezek. 1. 28 & Rev. 1. 17. *j* Dan. 8. 18 & 9. 21 & 10. 10, 18. *k* ch. 14. 27.
l For vers. 9–13, see Mark 9. 9–13. *m* See ch. 8. 4 & 12. 16.

the baptism (Matt. 3 : 17), and which was to be heard again when he stood on the threshold of his passion (John 12 : 28), attesting his divinity and sonship at the beginning, at the middle, and at the close of his ministry."[1] **This is my beloved Son.** Adding the voice of God to the attestation of the scene itself, and interpreting the scene. This truth must be impressed upon the disciples so that they should never lose their faith even in the dark times that were to follow ; and while others were calling Jesus a criminal and blasphemer the disciples could always see him in his true glory. **Hear ye him.** For he is the ambassador of God, bringing the message of love from heaven. "Hear" implies faith and obedience.

6. **They fell on their face, and were sore afraid.** For God himself was there. The great manifestations of God's power close at hand fill the soul, conscious of weakness and sin, with dread solemnity.

7. They remained with hidden faces till **Jesus came and touched them.** "Act and words were both expressive of an almost brotherly tenderness." **Be not afraid.** Only in Jesus can we draw nigh to God without dread.

8. Then suddenly lifting up their eyes (Mark), **they saw no man.** The two heavenly visitants had passed away in the cloud. Jerome says of this, "I so saw Moses, so I saw the prophets that I knew they were speaking of Christ . . . so that I may not remain in the law and the prophets, but through the law and the prophets I may come to Christ."

9. **As they came down.** To where the other disciples were waiting. **Jesus charged them, saying, Tell the vision,** the things seen, the spectacle, **to no man, until the Son of man be risen again from the dead.** Because (1) they could not fully understand its meaning until then, so as to tell it aright, — as to Jesus' nature, his death, his resurrection, the future life. (2) Those to whom they might tell it could still less comprehend its full meaning, and would misunderstand and pervert it. (3) It would make it harder for many to accept him as a teacher, and thus be led on to the complete acceptance of him as the Saviour of the world. (4) If they should believe in him as such a glorious being they would try still more earnestly to make him an earthly king, — a temptation he had again and again to resist. (5) The greatest value of the vision to most people would be at the time of his resurrection, and thereafter, when the disciples began to preach Jesus as the Saviour and King.

VI. LESSONS FROM THE TRANSFIGURATION.

1. Our richest and most heavenly experiences come in and through prayer, and often from united prayer.

"Lord, lead us to the mountain height ; to prayer's transfiguring glow ;
And may we bring a heavenly light to the dark world below."

"Tell me your prayers and I will write the history of a soul."

"Remember the lamp of Aladdin, which needed only to be rubbed to bring forth unseen powers to do the bidding of the possessor."[2]

Note how much the other nine lost by not being present at this prayer-meeting. They had not taken the steps in climbing the moral mountain, and so missed the scene and its blessing.

2. Only those who have served Christ faithfully in the valleys of daily duty, and have lived near to him, can climb with him the Mount of Transfiguration. Daily faithfulness is the ladder to heaven. "Unless a man has trained himself for his chance, the chance will only make him ridiculous. A great occasion is worth to a man exactly what his antecedents have enabled him to make of it."[3]

3. There is a glory in the Bible and in Christ beyond our ordinary conception, and often veiled, but always there to those who can see. Those who had seen Christ only in his human form were like those who had seen only the seeds of the rose or the bulb of the lily, but had no vision of the blossoms which could grow out of them.

4. There are heavenly experiences given occasionally to Christians, as a foretaste of their glory and a glimpse of the spiritual realities ever about them. That experience which was good for Peter

[1] *Cambridge Bible.* [2] Rev. Hugh Black, *Prayer.* [3] William Matthews.

10 And his disciples asked him, saying, Why then say the scribes [n] that E-li'as must first come?

E-li'jah

n See ch. 11. 14.

is good for us. We all need the highest and sweetest experiences of the love of Christ, to see him in his beauty and glory, to glance through the gates ajar, to feel the breath of heaven, and hear the voice of God. (*a*) It widens the outlook, giving earthly things their truer place in life. (*b*) It gives a clearer view of the end to which we are working, of the state to which God would bring all men. (*c*) It helps us bear our burdens, overcome our temptations, do our Christian work. We are amid sin, but we have seen the glory of the Master able to conquer it; we dwell amid sorrows, but we know him who has power to transform them; we see the work to be done, but here is new inspiration and hope. Light, victory, glory, heaven, shine henceforth on all the dark earth. (*d*) It gives a permanent uplifting to our character. (*e*) It helps to change us into the image of Christ.

"O Master, it is good to be
Entranced, enwrapt, alone with thee!
Till we, too, change from grace to grace,
Gazing on that transfigured face." [1]

5. These higher experiences, times of revival, exaltation, Pentecostal seasons, bless and inspire all the subsequent life, even though they do not continue in the mountain-top experience. A shower is not lost because the raindrops cease to fall and the water sinks out of sight in the ground. Carlyle, speaking of the Reformation, says, "Once risen into this divine white heat of temper, *were it only for a season and not again*, it (a nation) is henceforth considerable through all its remaining history. Nations are benefited for ages by being thrown once into divine white heat in this manner. And no nation that has not had such divine paroxysms at any time is apt to come to much."

6. As the Gospel, the Law, and the Prophets were all at one on the Transfiguration Mount, and concerned with the cross, so Christians are nearest together in doctrine when nearest to Christ in heavenly experience. The best Christians differ least in essentials. The cream of all the churches is very much alike. The churches become one on the Mount of Transfiguration. The differences in the light of our little lamps are all absorbed in the radiance of the sun. Here, too, most of the difficulties in the doctrines of grace vanish. The obstacles that obstruct our path on the earth are of no account to the eagle soaring above mountain and river.

7. The transfiguration was a promise, a prophecy, and a vision of our resurrection life. We not only are assured of the reality of the life beyond the grave, but by specimens of what we may become, we catch glimpses of the glory that awaits us. He "shall change our vile body, that it may be fashioned like unto his glorious body." "Then shall the righteous shine forth as the sun in the kingdom of their Father." "We know that when he shall appear we shall be like him, for we shall see him as he is." "As we have borne the image of the earthy, we shall also bear the image of the heavenly."

8. "As the gem is dull and black in the darkness, but glows and burns and palpitates, restless with living splendor, when it drinks the sunbeam, so our poor souls, dull as they are and base with sin, may be transfigured into glory and loveliness, if, emptied of their lusts and selfishness, they lay themselves wholly bare to receive the effluence of God." [2]

9. Sequestered joys, however blessed, lose their virtue, like the manna kept over contrary to divine command. Christians can retain the blessings of high religious experience only as they go down from the mount and use their experience in transfiguring their daily burdens and cares, and in attracting men to the cross of Christ. But the blessing was not lost because the experience did not continue. The transfiguration was a power, a comfort, a help all the rest of their lives. A deep experience in a Christian, a true revival in a church, Pentecostal seasons, are not lost because they do not continue in this form. They bless all the remaining time, and one fails of his best usefulness unless he has had the transfiguration experience. No one can measure the blessing of a shower by the amount of water that remains on the surface, nor the fruit on a tree by the length of time the blossoms of spring abide on its boughs. "God does not make the mountain tops to be inhabited; they are not for the homes of men. We ascend the height to catch a broader vision of our earthly surroundings, but we do not tarry there. The streams take their rise in these uplands, but quickly descend to gladden the fields and valleys below." [3]

10. **And his disciples asked**, on the way down

[1] Dean Stanley.

[2] Farrar.

[3] Prof. Henry Drummond, *Address at Northfield*.

Compare Longfellow's "Legend Beautiful," in *Tales of a Wayside Inn*: —

"'Hadst thou stayed, I must have fled!'
That is what the vision said."

See, also, Prof. William James' *Psychology*, the chapter on "Habit," and Butler's *Analogy*, part I., ch. 5, sec. 2.

11 And Je'sus (he) answered and said, unto them, E-li'as truly shall first come, (E-li'jah indeed cometh,) and (shall) [o] restore all things:

12 But (but) I say unto you, That E-li'as (that E-li'jah) is come already, and they knew him not, but [p] have done (did) unto him whatsoever they listed. [q] Likewise (Even so) shall (also) the Son of man also suffer of them.

13 [r] Then (the disciples understood) (understood the disciples) that he spake unto them of Jŏhn the Băp'tĭst.

14 ¶ [s] And when they were come to the multitude, there came to him a *certain* man, kneeling (down) to him, and saying,

o Mal. 4. 6. Luke 1. 16, 17. Cp. Acts 1. 6 & 3. 21. *p* ch. 14. 3, 10. *q* ch. 16. 21. *r* ch. 16. 12. *s* For vers. 14–19, see Mark 9. 14–28 & Luke 9. 37–42.

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the mountain (comp. vers. 9 and 14), the next morning (Luke). **Why then**, in view of what they had seen and heard. They had been questioning (Mark) what "the rising again from the dead should mean." Was this appearance of Elijah his resurrection, and was this the fulfilment of the saying of the scribes that Elias (Elijah) must first come? (1) They now accepted the fact that Jesus was the Messiah, but wanted to understand how this could be, since Elijah had not come, but was in heaven, as they now realized. (2) If this appearance of Elijah was the fulfilment of the prophecy, why should they not proclaim it, so as to prove him to be the Messiah, and why was the coming so secret and so short? Why had he departed instead of accompanying them? (3) If this was not his coming, when would he come, and how? What are we to answer to the assertion of the scribes, founded on the Scriptures, that Jesus could not be the Christ, because he had not been preceded by Elijah? Or is their teaching erroneous? The prophecy is found in Mal. 3 : 1 ; 4 : 4–6.

11. **Jesus answered . . . Elias truly shall first come.** The scribes are correct, and the Scripture shall not fail of fulfilment. **And restore all things.** Work a reformation; bring back the true basis and principles and life of the kingdom of God, which the Jews had perverted and turned aside. He began the reform of all things pertaining to the kingdom of God.

12. **But I say unto you.** I will interpret for you the saying of the scribes. **That Elias is come already, and they**, the scribes, **knew him not**, did not recognize him as the forerunner, did not see how he was fulfilling the prophecy, but they rejected and opposed him and his work, and the rulers imprisoned and murdered him; they **did unto him whatsoever they listed**, lusted, desired. List and lust are different forms of the same verb. **Likewise shall also the Son of man suffer of them.** That the scribes did not recognize and accept John the Baptist as Elijah was no proof that Elijah had not come; neither would it any more be proof that Jesus was not the Messiah because the scribes set him at naught.

13. **Then the disciples understood.** What Jesus had taught them a year before, when John, in prison, had sent messengers to Jesus, inquiring whether he was really the Messiah (11 : 10). It was a difficult lesson, and they needed it to be repeated, that John the Baptist fulfilled the prophecy, and had come in "the spirit and power of Elijah."

SECTION XVII.—FINAL INSTRUCTIONS OF THE GALILEAN MINISTRY (*in part*).

I. THE LUNATIC CHILD, vers. 14–18.

TIME. Immediately after the Transfiguration.
PARALLELS. Mark 9 : 14–27 ; Luke 9 : 37–43.

This incident reminds us of Raphael's Transfiguration, where this scene is placed beneath on the earth in contrast with the glorious three, the discords of earth with the harmonies of heaven. It pictures in vivid colors the reasons why Peter and the Christ should not remain on the glorified mountain top, but come down into the world of suffering to minister to its needs. Christ's church is not, at present, the church of "Heavenly Rest," but of "Earthly Activities."

14. **And when they were come to the multitude**, who were surrounding the disciples and the scribes discussing with them (Mark). The crowds were greatly amazed and affrighted. Not so much, perhaps, at traces of the glory in his countenance like the shining of Moses' face, for that would have betrayed his secret,[1] but at the unexpected appearance of Jesus, who was supposed to be far away. But the word Mark uses "points to an extremity of terror,"[2] so that it implies that there was something awe-inspiring in the appearance of Jesus. As Jesus drew near, the multitudes came running to him, and among the first **came to him a certain man, kneeling**, in token of respect and supplication.

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[1] So the *Int. Crit. Com.*, and Prof. Swete.

[2] *Cambridge Bible.*

15 Lord, have mercy on my son: for he is [t] lunatick, epileptic, and sore vexed: suffereth grievously: for ofttimes oft-times he falleth into the fire, and oft oft-times into the water.

16 And I brought him to thy disciples, and [u] they could not cure him.

17 Then And Jē'sus answered and said, O [v] faithless and [v] perverse generation, [w] how long shall I be with you? how long shall I suffer bear with you? bring him hither to me.

18 And Jē'sus [x] rebuked the devil him; and he departed the devil went out of from him: and [y] the child boy was cured from that very hour.

19 Then came the disciples to Jē'sus apart, and said, Why could not we cast him it out?

20 And Je'sus said he saith unto them, [z] Because of your unbelief: little faith: for [a] verily I say unto you, [b] If ye have faith as a grain of mustard seed, [c] ye shall say unto this

t ch. 4. 24. *u* Cp. ch. 10. 1 & Mark 6. 7 & Luke 10. 17. *v* Phil. 2. 15. Cp. John 20. 27. *w* Cp. John 14. 9. *x* ch. 8. 26. Zech. 3. 2. Mark 1. 25. Luke 4. 35, 39. Jude 9. *y* See ch. 9. 22. *z* Cp. John 11. 40. See ch. 6. 30. *a* ch. 21. 21, 22. Mark 11. 23. *b* Luke 17. 6. Cp. ch. 13. 31. *c* ver. 9. Cp. 1 Cor. 13. 2.

15. **Have mercy on my son: for he is lunatick.** R. V., epileptic, in connection with which disease he was possessed with a demon (ver. 18).

He was sore vexed. R. V., "suffereth grievously." He was dumb, "he foameth and grindeth his teeth, and pineth away" (Mark). "A spirit taketh him and he suddenly crieth out; and it teareth him" (Luke). **For ofttimes he falleth into the fire, and . . . into the water.** It was a very sad and dangerous case.

16. **And I brought him to thy disciples,** in the absence of Jesus, **and they could not cure him,** although the authority and power to cast out devils had been given to them (10 : 1). But this was an unusually desperate case, and his cries and foaming and gnashing his teeth affected them as the stormy waves affected Peter when he undertook to walk on the water.

17. **O faithless,** unbelieving, without faith, or with weak faith; **and perverse generation,** perverted, turned aside from the right way, in error as to God, and his Son, and their loving power. This was said to all,—disciples, people, scribes, the father, the nation. It was the characteristic of that generation. **How long shall I be with you?** As your teacher, exemplifying my power, before you will understand what I am, and your own power through me. **How long shall I suffer you,** bear with you, such dull scholars. **Bring him hither to me.** He was brought to Jesus, and the demon wrought his worst upon the boy in the presence of Jesus. Jesus asked his father about him, and learned that he had been thus afflicted since he was a little child. Then Jesus said to the father that he would heal his boy, if he could believe, in spite of past failures of the disciples to cure him; for "all things are possible to him that believeth." The father replied in those touching words which each of us often adopts as his own, Lord, I believe; help thou my unbelief.

18. **And Jesus rebuked the devil** the demon, commanding him to come out of the boy. **And the child was cured from that very hour.** At first he seemed like one dead, but Jesus "took him by the hand and raised him up."

II. A LESSON ON FAITH, vers. 19–21.

19. **Then came the disciples to Jesus apart** in the house (Mark), away from all that were curious and fault-finding. Teachers and ministers, "who are to deal for Christ in public, have need to keep up a private communion with him, that they may in secret inquire into the cause of their weakness and straitness in their public performances."[1] **Why could not we cast him out?** They were puzzled, and did not realize that Jesus was speaking to them as well as to others, when he expressed his disappointment at their want of faith.

20. **And Jesus said, . . . Because of your unbelief.** R. V., "your little faith."

FAITH is not merely belief, but such a trust in God, such confidence in him, as brings the soul into communion with him, as leads to obedience, to the use of the means he provides, and makes the whole spiritual world real.

If ye have faith as a grain of mustard seed, "the smallest of garden seeds;" even a very little faith, but real and living, not like a grain of sand, but with life in it, and a power of growing. **Ye shall say unto this mountain,** the great Mount Hermon which was towering above them. **Remove hence to yonder place,** wherever it is needed, even into the sea (21 : 21). **It shall remove; and nothing shall be impossible unto**

[1] Matthew Henry.

mountain, Remove hence to yonder place; and it shall remove; and [d] nothing shall be impossible unto you.

21 Howbeit this kind goeth not out but by prayer and fasting.

[d] Mark 9. 23.

you. However great this promise was it was none too large for the needs of the apostles, or for ours. If God answers some prayers and not others, we cannot know when to trust him. In Longfellow's *Tales of a Wayside Inn* he describes the Theologian as one

> "Who studied still with deep research
> To build the Universal Church, —
> Lofty as the love of God,
> And ample as the wants of man."

Any promise that God would give must be

> "Lofty as the love of God,"

and any promise that is sufficient for man must be

> "Ample as the wants of man,"

including the whole range of his needs, at all times, in all places, under all circumstances.[1]

THE FAITH THAT REMOVES MOUNTAINS.

(1.) What did the disciples understand by this promise? The removing of a literal mountain or obstacles as great as a mountain? Their actions and the actual results show that they understood "mountain" as a symbol. If I were to say to a man under great temptation, — for instance, a drinking man struggling with an appetite for strong drink, — "Christ will help you to conquer this dragon, and with the same weapons with which Christian overcame Apollyon and his fiery darts," would any one dream that a real dragon was meant, like the one with multitudinous coils described in Spenser's *Faerie Queene*, or seen in the pictures of St. George and the Dragon, or a literal monster breathing literal fire? Not even a child would so interpret it.

No apostle, relying on this promise, attempted to remove literal mountains.

(2.) But the apostles did remove real, though not literal, material mountains. Great mountains, apparently insurmountable, stood in their path. A little band of twelve unlearned men, without money, without armies, without rank, without everything that would seem able to do the work, had to conquer the Roman Empire, when "to be a Roman was greater than a king," — Rome, the mistress of the world; Rome, that had subdued the whole known world; Rome, the embodiment of wealth and power, that could have swept these few men out of existence as easily as one would brush away so many insects. What was removing Mount Hermon to this? But it was done. The apostles were to graft a new kingdom on the old Jewish stock, and everything stood in their way: pride, prejudice, custom, learning, sacrifices, the temple, the formal religion, office, wealth, — mountains higher than Lebanon. But these mountains were removed. They had to conquer the human heart, intrenched in sins, luxury, fashion, habit, social customs interwoven with the whole daily life. What were Tabor or Hermon to this hopeless task? Yet they did these things. The promise was literally and really fulfilled. Moral changes were wrought that to all human power were impossible. The whole history of the church and the present condition of Christendom are the fulfilment of this promise.

(3.) The faith that has removed mountains is a faith that takes hold of the power of God, that sees the invisible victories afar off, and waits patiently, obediently, in active work for the promised results; that so trusts its leader and master as never to be discouraged by defeat or disaster, nor by hope long delayed. God says to a man, Do the work of a thousand men. But that is harder than to remove mountains. Yet Christian civilization has invented machinery by which any man can do it. The faith on this low plane, that has worked patiently, steadily, with God's physical powers, and wrought seeming impossibilities, is a perpetual illustration of the power of spiritual faith taking hold of God.

21. **Howbeit**, but, **this kind goeth not out but by prayer and fasting.** This verse is omitted by the revisers, and placed in the margin, as not having the best authority, being omitted in the two oldest manuscripts. Yet it has a good deal of authority. **This kind.** "This species of demons . . . must be intended to specify a kind of demons which it is peculiarly difficult to exorcise."[2] **Prayer and fasting**, prayer so earnest, so intense that it is willing to go without things right and good, in order to accomplish the end desired. Every great reformer does this. The apostles did it, missionaries do it, many ministers do it. Going without food for a time is but a small part, if any, in this fasting. That were easy. But they must work while others are at ease. They must give time and strength where others gain wealth, and live beautiful, useful, and pleasant lives. Such lives are lives of fasting. The work of the Church is still to cast out devils, the unclean spirits of worldliness, selfishness, greed, infidelity, lust, intemperance, Sabbath-breaking. These defy the ordinary efforts and faith of God's people. We have faith enough for ordinary duties, for no little giving, for prayer-

[1] See Tennyson's *Idylls of the King*, "More things are wrought by prayer."

[2] Meyer.

22 ¶ [e] And while they abode in Găl′ĭ-lee, Jē′s̤us said unto them, The Son of
man shall be betrayed / delivered up into the hands of men;
23 And / and they shall kill him, and [f] the third day he shall be raised again. / up. And
they were exceeding sorry.
24 ¶ And [g] when they were come to Cā-pĕr′na̤-ŭm, they that received
[h] tribute money / the half-shekel came to Pē′tĕr, and said, Doth not your master pay tribute? / the half shekel?
25 He saith, Yes. / Yea. And when he was come / came into the house, Jē′s̤us prevented / spake first to him,

e For vers. 22, 23, see Mark 9. 30–32 & Luke 9. 43–45. Cp. ch. 16. 21–28 & 20. 17–19. *f* See Mark 8. 31. *g* Mark 9. 33. *h* Ex. 30. 13 & 38. 26.

meetings, for building churches; but there is a work which ordinary faith cannot do. How shall we get that higher faith? By prayer and such fasting, and never without them both.

III. CHRIST AGAIN FORETELLS HIS DEATH AND RESURRECTION, vers. 22, 23.

PARALLELS. Mark 9: 30–32; Luke 9: 43–45.

22. **And while they abode in Galilee.** Jesus and his disciples went down from Cesarea Philippi through Galilee to Capernaum. They went with as little recognition as possible, because Jesus wished to instruct his disciples privately, and large crowds, and days full of public instruction and miracles, would have seriously interfered with this instruction. The expression *abode*, "or more literally 'while they were going about,' implies that some time was spent there." During this time Jesus repeated again with emphasis what he had said to them a short time before (16: 21–23), that he must suffer death, but that he would rise again to life. It was very hard to make them understand the fact; still harder for them to see how he then could be the Messiah and bring in the kingdom of heaven.

23. **And they were exceeding sorry**, as they naturally would be, when they were to lose not only their friend and teacher, but their hopes of the new kingdom and their Messiah King. Their thoughts rested so much on the cross that they did not see the open grave and the risen life beyond it. It was on this journey, too, that the dispute arose as to who should be greatest (18: 1).

IV. THE TRIBUTE MONEY, vers. 24–27.

TIME. Autumn, A. D. 29. Some days or weeks after the Transfiguration.

PLACE. Capernaum.

Recorded only by Matthew.

24. **They that received tribute money** (τὰ δίδραχμα), the didrachmas, Greek coins equivalent each to a half shekel, worth about 1s. 4½d. English currency,[1] or about thirty-three cents. It is in the plural because it was paid annually. This tribute was not a Roman tax, but the Jewish temple tax; a religious and not a political tribute. "Every male Israelite of age, including proselytes and manumitted Jews, was expected to pay annually for the temple service a half shekel or *didrachm*, about thirty-three cents. This must be paid in the ancient money of Israel, the regular half shekel of the treasury; and the money-changers, therefore, were in demand to change the current into the temple coin, which they did at a rate of discount fixed by law, between four and five cents on every half shekel. The annual revenue to the money-changers from this source has been estimated at nearly forty-five thousand dollars; a very large sum in a country where a laborer received less than twenty cents for a day's work, and where the good Samaritan left about thirty-three cents at the inn for the keeping of the wounded man. Jesus attacked a very powerful interest when he overthrew the tables of the money-changers."[2]

Came to Peter, as one of the leading disciples, or very probably Jesus was living at Peter's house. They may have hesitated to ask the Great Teacher himself, knowing he had set at naught many of their customs and teachings. It may have been another of their plans to entrap Jesus. **Doth not your master pay tribute**, the half shekel? If he did not he would seem to be opposed to the Temple and its services, and so be discredited before the people.

25. **He saith, Yes.** That was the custom of Jesus. **Jesus prevented him**, anticipated him. "Prevent," when our authorized translation was made, had its natural meaning of "coming before," "anticipating." And as one "getting before" another is in a position to "hinder" him, and he often "goes before" on purpose to "hinder," the word has come in our day to have that meaning. But here it means that Jesus spoke to Peter about the tribute money before Peter had time to report what the temple collectors had said to him.

Of whom do the kings of the earth take

[1] Hastings' *Bib. Dictionary.*

[2] Prof. Vincent, *Word Studies.*

saying, [i]What thinkest thou, Sī'mon? of whom do the kings of the earth,
from whom do they receive [j]toll or [j]tribute? of from their own children, sons, or of from strangers?
26 Pe'ter saith unto him, Of And when he said, From strangers; Jē'sus saith said unto him, Then are the children Therefore the sons are free.
27 Notwithstanding, But, lest we [k]should offend cause them, to stumble, go thou to the sea, and cast
an a hook, and take up the fish that first cometh up; and when thou hast opened his mouth, thou shalt find a piece of money: shekel: that take, and give unto them for me and thee.

i ch. 18. 12 & 21. 28. *j* ch. 22. 17, 19. Mark 12. 14. Rom. 13. 7. *k* See ch. 5. 29.

custom, (τέλη), "a duty on goods," or **tribute** (κῆνσον, of which our *census*, from the Latin, is a transcription, because a census was originally a register or valuation of property with a view to taxation), "the tax or tribute levied on individuals and to be paid yearly." [1] **Of**, from, **their own children**, sons, members of the royal family, or **of**, from, **strangers** (αλλοτρίων), *belonging to another family;* not foreigners, but other men, subjects, citizens of the kingdom, who are not of the royal family.

26. **Peter saith unto him, Of**, from, **strangers**, as above. The subjects of the kingdom pay taxes, but **the children**, the royal family, are **free**, exempt from taxation. Therefore Jesus, as the Son of God, to whom the Temple belongs, and as the Messiah King, would with his disciples be free from taxation.

27. **Notwithstanding, lest we should offend them.** Cause them to stumble, give them needless offence, because they would not understand his claims, for they did not recognize him as the Messiah. For Jesus to refuse would prejudice them and the people against him, as opposed to religion and the Temple with its divinely appointed services.

"Jesus here illustrates a fixed principle of all reforms, viz., the avoidance of actions which are

Silver Stater of Augustus.

A Tetradrachma of Antioch. The "piece of money" Peter found in the fish's mouth.

not absolutely essential for the success of the reform, and which, because easily misunderstood, and so arousing prejudice, would make it more difficult for others to join in the good movement." [2] But that his action might not be misunderstood by his disciples as a relinquishment of his claims, he obtains the money for the tax in a right royal way. **Cast an hook.** This is the only mention in the New Testament of fishing with

Silver Shekel of Simon Maccabeus.

The coin in which the temple tax was paid. Of the same value as the stater.

a hook. **Thou shalt find a piece of money.** A definite coin is designated by the original word, "a stater," a four-drachma coin, of the same value as a shekel, which was double the temple tax, and therefore enough for both Jesus and Peter. The stater, according to Hastings' *Bible Dictionary*, was worth about sixty-six cents.

NOTE. (1.) Jesus, who was firmer than a rock where principle was involved, took care not to give needless offence. He would do everything possible to take away stumbling-blocks in the way of accepting the Gospel.

(2.) This was especially wise and good in the giving up of rights and just claims for this purpose. His disciples often have occasion to follow his example in this, as in the case Paul refers to concerning food offered to idols. We have a right to give up our rights, but not to compel others to do the same.

(3.) This case involved some difficult questions of conscience. The temple tax helped to support some priests who were very far from good, and temple services which were often far from the truest religious life, and connected with such evils as those of the money-changers and sellers of cattle. We often have to support services and causes which we regard as imperfect, because they are the best we have. It is better to stand by and help improve them, than to keep away and have no leavening power.

[1] Thayer's *Lexicon.*

[2] Prof. Shailer Matthews.

CHAPTER 18.

SECTION XVII. — FINAL INSTRUCTIONS OF THE GALILEAN MINISTRY (*continued*).

5. SOME GREAT TRUTHS A LITTLE CHILD CAN TEACH US, vers. 1–10.
   - Greatness in the kingdom of heaven.
   - Concerning offences.
   - Despising the little ones.
6. SAVING THE LOST, vers. 11–14.
   - Illustrated by the Parable of The Lost Sheep.
7. THE TREATMENT OF THOSE WHO INJURE US, vers. 15–18.
8. THE POWER OF UNITED PRAYER, vers. 19, 20.
9. FORGIVING OTHERS SEVENTY TIMES SEVEN TIMES, vers. 21–35.
   - Enforced by the Parable of The Two Debtors.

Time.

Autumn, A. D. 29.

Place.

Capernaum, close of Galilean ministry.

Beginning of the last six months of Jesus' public ministry.

1 *l* At the same time (In that hour) came the disciples unto Jē'sus, saying, Who (then) is (the) greatest in the kingdom of heaven?

l ch. 17. 24. For vers. 1–5, see Mark 9. 33–37 & Luke 9. 46–48. Cp. ch. 20. 20–28.

V. SOME GREAT TRUTHS TAUGHT BY A LITTLE CHILD, vers. 1–10.

TIME. Immediately after the return of Peter with the tribute money.

PLACE. A house in Capernaum, probably Peter's.

PARALLELS. Mark 9: 33–40; Luke 9: 46–50.

THE DISCUSSION BY THE WAY, ON GREATNESS IN THE KINGDOM OF HEAVEN. We learn from Mark (9: 33, 34) that on the way home from the Mount of Transfiguration the disciples had a sharp discussion among themselves as to who was the greatest. It may have arisen (1) from the fact that three of their number had been selected by Jesus for his companions on the mount; (2) the keys had been given to Peter by name, and to the others in a more general way, and he was to be a foundation stone of the kingdom (16: 18, 19); (3) Judas, as the treasurer, may have had special ambitions, as he thought of being chief of the treasury of the Messiah King; (4) those who had received special favors may, possibly, have usurped some authority, assumed a dictatorial spirit, which would naturally be resented by the others; we know that some time after this the mother of James and John came to Jesus, asking for her sons the place nearest the king (Matt. 20: 20, 21); (5) all this would be intensified by their expectation that the kingdom was soon to be set up.

THE APPEAL TO JESUS. 1. **At the same time,** with the incident of the tribute money, **came the disciples unto Jesus, saying, Who is the greatest in the kingdom of heaven?** Putting the three accounts together, the conversation would be something like this: —

Jesus says, As I was walking before you (as in Mark 10: 33) on our way from the mountain, I overheard you earnestly discussing among yourselves (for in their earnestness they raised their voices). What were you arguing about?

The disciples are silent (for they had been disputing as to who was the greatest; and they were ashamed of it, in the presence of Jesus).

Jesus knew the reasoning of their heart. They could not hide from him what the question was, and that they were very much interested in it (Luke).

The disciples, or some of them, then ask Jesus, "Who then is greatest in the kingdom of heaven?" Will you settle the question for us? "Their question was not, What elements of character make true greatness? Who of us *is* greatest? but, Who of us shall occupy the highest place in your coming kingdom?"[1] "What seductive dreams of greatness and glory rose before these Galilean fishermen as the nearest followers of the great king!" And yet these dreams were but the dim starlight compared with the noonday glory they actually received in Christ's way of attaining greatness.

Jesus replies that they have mistaken the very

[1] Lyman Abbott.

2 And Je'sus he called to him a little child, unto him, and set him in the midst of them,
3 And and said, Verily I say unto you, Except ye *m* be converted, turn, and *n* become as little children, ye *o* shall in no wise not enter into the kingdom of heaven.
4 *p* Whosoever therefore shall humble himself as this little child, the same is the *o* greatest in the kingdom of heaven.

m See Luke 22. 32. *n* ch. 19. 14. Mark 10. 15. Luke 18. 17. Cp. Ps. 131. 2 & 1 Cor. 14. 20 & 1 Pet. 2. 2. *o* Cp. ch. 5. 19, 20. *p* ch. 20. 27 & 23. 11, 12.

nature of greatness in the kingdom of heaven, of which they are a part. Seeking to be great is a proof of littleness. It is service for others that proves greatness there, so that the very desire to be first *makes* him last by the very nature of things.

The Object Lesson: A Little Child. 2. **Jesus called a little child unto him** (one of the household, or one playing near), **and set him in the midst of them**, and then took him in his arms in loving embrace, to make the lesson more impressive, and to show his sympathy with childhood and his love for children. How many who have children in heaven have been comforted by this loving act of Jesus, remembering that he is the same now in heaven as he was on earth eighteen hundred years ago!

> "Not in entire forgetfulness, . . .
> But trailing clouds of glory do we come
> From God, who is our home:
> Heaven lies about us in our infancy."[1]

3. **Except ye be converted.** The word here rendered *be converted* means "turn about so as to face in the other direction." It always signifies a radical and complete change in method, spirit, or course. Here it is: Unless you turn entirely away from this habit of self-seeking, you cannot enter the kingdom of heaven, much less be greatest in it. The aorist tense expresses a past act that still continues.

Note the difference between "converted" and "turn." Some men have waited for God to convert them, when it was their duty to turn "right about face."

And become as little children. Not sinless, for no children are sinless. They all need to be saved from being lost, as we see a little further on (vers. 11, 14). And if none but the sinless could enter the kingdom of heaven, that kingdom, on earth, would be empty. The meaning is, you must have those qualities which are characteristic of childhood, which make the ideal childhood. As Dr. Robinson puts it, "What you would have your child be to you, that be yourself to God." The ideal childhood is exemplified by the childhood of Jesus himself. These qualities are: (1) humility; (2) freedom from ambition, rivalry, or jealousy; (3) tender and gracious affection; (4) perfect trust; (5) obedience; (6) a teachable spirit; (7) unworldliness; (8) indifference to the distinctions of rank and wealth. **Shall not enter.** Not only could not be first, as they were seeking to be, but could not even *enter* the kingdom, and have any part in it. Why? (1) Because the kingdom of heaven is a spiritual kingdom, and the self-seeking spirit is diametrically opposed to its spirit. The childlike spirit is the only gate to that kingdom, just as a musical taste is necessary to entering into the kingdom of music, and a love of literature into the kingdom of learning. Sitting in a music hall or in a library does not give entrance into those kingdoms. (2) Because without this spirit one will not even seek to enter by the only door. He will be self-confident in his own wrong way.

4. **Whosoever therefore shall humble himself** (so as to be) **as this little child** is in this company, his natural, unassuming self. To humble one's self is not to think meanly of one's self, not to disparage one's self, not to be unconscious of our powers or knowledge, but not to think highly of ourselves on this account, not to seek honor or greatness for ourselves, but simply to use whatever we have or are in the humblest service, with no thought of ourselves. Contrast the false humility of Uriah Heep, one of Dickens' characters. **The same is greatest in the kingdom of heaven**, for he has most of the heavenly spirit. Only disinterested love can be great. Selfishness dims the crown and diminishes the realm of those who would otherwise be great.

The Self-seeking Spirit leads to Satan's kingdom, not to Christ's. It is the spirit of hell, not of heaven. It begets evils innumerable and sorrows unspeakable. "Fling away ambition; by that sin fell the angels." *Aut Cæsar aut nullus*, "To be first or nothing" leads to crimes and wars. It was Milton's Satan who said, "Better to reign in hell than serve in heaven." "How like a mounting devil in the heart rules the unreined ambition!" Whoever would be greatest in any kingdom must be greatest in the things which form the essential nature of that kingdom. Whoever would be greatest in the kingdom of literature must be greatest in literature, not in prize-fighting. So he that would be greatest in

[1] Wordsworth. See, also, Charles M. Dickinson's poem, *The Children*.

5 And [q] whoso shall receive one such little child in my name receiveth me:
6 But [r] whoso shall offend cause one of these little ones which believe in on me, to stumble, it were better is profitable for him that a great millstone should be were hanged about his neck, and *that* he were drowned should be sunk in the depth of the sea.

q Cp. ch. 10. 40, 42. *r* Mark 9. 42. Luke 17. 2. Cp. 1 Cor. 8. 12.

the kingdom of heaven must be greatest in love, in self-denial, in faith, in service, in purity, and in all the other virtues which make heaven what it is.

Distinguish between the strong desire to improve, to have large usefulness, to grow in holiness and love, and the desire to have more honor and power, or even to be better, than others. To do the very best we can in everything is our duty. The song, "O, to be nothing!" is right if it means that we are willing to take any place, and give all the honor to Jesus, but wrong if it means that we are willing to be ciphers in God's work.

NOTE that this greatness is possible to all, even to the weakest, the youngest, the poorest.

5. **Whoso shall receive.** Shall recognize and welcome, shall see in him the beauty of his character, and admire the qualities which belong to the ideal child character. **One such little child.** The representative of childhood. **In my name.** For my sake, because he sees in the child the characteristics "which Christ himself approved and exhibited." **Receiveth me.** Recognizes, loves, admires, appreciates me. The Christ spirit is in him.

PRACTICAL. (1) This truth is both a test and a means. What a man loves declares what he is. Cultivating love for any person of noble character is one means of obtaining that character. (2) The effect of children in the church is most blessed upon the church itself. It is beneficial to the spirit of the church. It brings youthful enthusiasm and hope. It influences the preaching and the form in which the doctrines are expressed, so as to be best for the older ones because adapted to the young. Thus the church that most heartily receives and welcomes the children has the most of Christ.

STUMBLING-BLOCKS. According to Mark (9: 38–41), John relates an incident which raises a question about receiving Christ, which led to a warning concerning putting stumbling-blocks in the way of (ver. 6) **these little ones which believe in** (on) **me.** Not only children, but the young and inexperienced in the Christian life, those who are weak and lowly. **Offend.** Cause to stumble into sin, block their way to life. The verb is derived from a noun σκάνδαλον, (*skandalon*, allied to scandal, slander), "the stick in a trap on which the bait is placed, and which springs up and shuts the trap at the touch of any animal." Hence the word refers to causing children to fall into sin, by temptations through which they are caught in the snares of sin and Satan. **It were better for him that a millstone.** A great millstone. "Two kinds of millstones were in use: the one turned by hand; the other, and larger, by an ass. It was this latter of which Jesus speaks." (The smaller, in Luke 17: 35.) **Were hanged about his neck,** to make escape impossible. **And that he were drowned in the depth of the sea,** which was within sight. It is better to die a thousand deaths than to lead another into sin, and thus *to murder his soul.* The offender gains a millstone, but loses his life. It is Satan that says, "All that a man hath will he give for his life" (Job 2: 4). To every true man there are many things worth more than life.

> "For sadder sight than eye can know,
> Than proud bark lost, or seamen's woe,
> Than battle fire, or tempest cloud,
> Or prey bird's shriek, or ocean shroud, —
> The shipwreck of the soul."

But there is one sadder sight, and that is the shipwrecking of others' souls, holding out the false light that ruins others as well as ourselves.

PUTTING STUMBLING-BLOCKS IN THE WAY OF CHILDREN. (1) By teaching that children cannot become Christians while young; (2) by neglect of their religious training; (3) by the example of parents who are more interested in worldly things than in religion, who neglect family prayer, and the church, and Sabbath-school; (4) by "all conduct on the part of the church, the teacher, or the parent which tends to repress, chill, or check the enthusiasm of childhood for Christ, and darken its simple faith in him;" (5) by fault-finding with the church and good people in their presence, thus lessening their respect and reverence for them. (6) Children are hindered from coming to Christ by building the audience rooms, conducting the worship, forming the choir, almost solely for the benefit of the adults, and doing very little for the convenience and instruction of the children.

Compare the disciples hindering little children from going to Jesus (Mark 10: 13, 14).

STUMBLING-BLOCKS IN THE WAY OF THE WEAK. The true church always takes special care of the weak, the innocent, the neglected, the poor, all who have something of childlike dependence. Stumbling-blocks are put in their way by neglect, by coldness of welcome, by permitting temptations, by pride, by false distinctions, by

7 ¶ Woe unto the world because of [s] offences! occasions of stumbling! [t] for it must needs be that offences the occasions come; [u] but woe to that man by through whom the offence occasion cometh!

8 [v] Wherefore And if thy hand or thy foot offend causeth thee to stumble, cut them it off, and cast them it from thee: it is better good for thee to enter into life halt maimed or maimed, halt, rather than having two hands or two feet to be cast into [w] everlasting the eternal fire.

9 [v] And if thine eye offend causeth thee to stumble, pluck it out, and cast it from thee: it is better good for thee to enter into life with one eye, rather than having two eyes to be cast into the [v] hell of fire.

10 Take heed See that ye despise not [x] one of these little ones; for I say unto you, That that in heaven [y] their angels do always [z] behold the face of my Father which is in heaven.

s See ch. 13. 41. *t* Luke 17. 1. See 1 Cor. 11. 19. *u* ch. 26. 24. *v* ch. 5. 29, 30. Mark 9. 43–48. *w* See ch. 25. 41. *x* Cp. ch. 6. 29 & 25. 40, 45 & Luke 15. 7, 10. *y* Acts 12. 15. Cp. Ps. 34. 7 & 91. 11 & Heb. 1. 14. *z* Luke 1. 19. Rev. 8. 2. Cp. Esth. 1. 14.

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want of the gentle and loving training that does not "quench the smoking flax" nor "break the bruised reed."

7. **Woe unto the world.** Not a wish, but a lamentation, a warning, a statement of fact. **Because of offences.** Because there are so many stumbling-blocks in the way of men becoming good, and especially in the way of children. No parent, without a feeling of dread, looks forward to the dangers, the pitfalls, the temptations, the fierce storms, the dragons and Apollyons, the deadly moral malaria, the enemies of every kind, which his child must meet.

> "Who shall preserve thee, beautiful child,
> Keep thee as thou art now;
> Bring thee a spirit undefiled
> At God's pure throne to bow?"

For it must needs be that offences come. It is unavoidable in this sinful world that those who would serve Christ should be tempted. They cannot live in the world and not meet all manner of temptations and hindrances. **But woe to that man by whom the offence cometh!** Who is guilty of this most awful of sins, the leading of others into sin. He that sins himself is weak, but he that leads others into sin is devilish. It is a fiend's business, especially to so treat the children and the weak.

8. **Wherefore.** Because if you yourself fall, you will make others stumble over you; if you cannot gain the victory, you discourage others from entering the warfare against evil. Every one of your sins and failures, your strifes and ambitions, your unchildlike spirit, your faults, will be a stumbling-block in the way of the young. Moreover, if it is evil to cause others to stumble, it must be evil to stumble yourself. **If thy hand or thy foot offend thee** (lead thee into sin), **cut them off.** The meaning is, if objects dear as the right eye and useful as the right hand — honors, possessions, enjoyments — stand between us and the righteous heavenly spirit, not merely tempt us, but cause us to fall into sin, if we are unable to battle with and overcome the temptation, we must give them up rather than the heavenly life. **Hand.** The temptation to *do* what is wrong. **Foot.** *Going* into forbidden ways. **Halt.** Or *lame* from the loss of a foot. **Maimed.** From the loss of a hand. **Eye** (ver. 9). Coveting, lusting. **Better . . . to enter into life halt . . . maimed . . . with one eye.** Not that any can be literally such in heaven; but it is better to have eternal life here, to be a true Christian, and to enter into heaven "*without enjoying* the things that caused us to sin than to enjoy them *here* and then be lost" (ver. 8). **Cast into** (the) **everlasting fire.** That prepared for the devil and his angels (Matt. 25: 41). Fire is the symbol of the most terrible torment, and nothing can put it out. The consequences of sin are eternal.

9. **Hell fire.** The hell, or Gehenna of fire. The literal Gehenna was a valley to the south of Jerusalem, a former scene of Molech worship, and later the place where the refuse of the city was burned with perpetual fires, — a graphic symbol of the refuse place of the universe. This terrible warning comes from the most loving heart in the universe. It is love, not hate, that points out the danger of sin. Love's hand rings the warning fire bell. Love lights the beacon to keep men from being wrecked. He that refuses or neglects to warn is the one who is cruel.

10. **Take heed that ye despise not,** look down upon as of small account, so as to neglect their interests, or be careless of what you do for them, or in their presence. **For I say unto you,** making the revelation emphatic, **that in heaven their angels,** the angels who represent them and have them under their care, not after death, but now, all the time. "It is not asserted, or necessarily implied, that each little one has a guardian angel. The angels as a class are 'min-

11 For the Son of man is come to save that which was lost.

12 [a] How think ye? [b] if [a] any man have [an] a hundred sheep, and one of them be gone astray, doth he not leave the ninety and nine, and [goeth into] go unto the mountains, and [seeketh] seek that which [is gone] goeth astray?

a ch. 17. 25 & 21. 28. *b* For vers. 12–14, cp. Luke 15. 4–7.

istering spirits, sent forth to do service for the sake of them that shall inherit salvation' (Heb. 1:14). Since these pure, exalted beings are thus employed, we should not despise one weak or young Christian."[1] **Do always behold the face of my Father.** Either those to whose care the little ones are committed are the highest and holiest angels nearest the throne, or they always have ready and immediate access to the Father (represented as a king receiving messengers and ambassadors), to present their needs and wrongs. Others can wait; these are always cared for at the moment. There is no neglect of them in heaven. Therefore there should be none on earth.

PRACTICAL. One chapter in George William Curtis' story, *Prue and I*, is called "Mr. Titbottom's Spectacles," the magical quality of which was, that they revealed not the outward form but the essential character, so that one of his schoolteachers was a deep well of living water in which he saw the stars. Another was a tropical garden full of fruits and flowers. In one woman's heart lay concealed in the depth of character, little suspected by most, great excellences like pearls at the bottom of the sea.

It is with some such vision that the angels often see in the child and the lowly possible saints and martyrs, men and women who shall change this world for the better, angels excelling in strength, with victors' crowns and harps of heavenly praise.

So, too, should the church see these possibilities in her children and never for one moment despise them. That church will be most successful which does the most for her children, trains them, educates them, welcomes them, arranges services for them, favors the Sunday-school, furnishes them with the best rooms, and plenty of books and everything that contributes to their nurture.

The town, too, is wise that does not despise her children, but cares more for school-houses than for roads, and selects her teachers more carefully than any other officers of the town.

VI. CHRIST'S MISSION, TO SAVE THE LOST, vers. 11–14.

Compare Luke 15: 3–7; 19: 10; and 9: 56. The point of the parable lies in the great care for those who are insignificant and of little value in the eyes of men.

11. **For the Son of man**, etc. This verse is omitted in the R. V., because it is not found in the best manuscripts. But it is put in the margin with the statement that many manuscripts, some ancient, contain it. It may have been taken from Luke 19: 10. But the statement is eternal truth, and shows how earnestly Jesus seeks to help the very ones he wants his followers to help. In Luke 15, the lost one is compared to a lost coin stamped with the image of its Maker; blackened with rust, or soiled with mud, covered with dust, but still made of silver, and with traces of the image and superscription of its Maker which gave it value.[2] It still is his, and is precious. Jesus seeks the lost, not to condemn them, but that he may find and transform them. His heart —

> "spies the summer through the winter bud,
> She tastes the fruit before the blossom falls,
> She hears the lark within the songless egg,
> She finds the fountain where they wailed 'Mirage.'"[3]

12. **If a man.** Even an ordinary man, of average goodness, will seek for a lost sheep; how much more our heavenly Father for his lost sheep. **Have an hundred sheep.** Enough, but not so many but that each one could be under the personal watch and care of the shepherd. The sheep are those who belong to the Good Shepherd, for whom he has the utmost care. Sheep are among the most helpless of animals, and represent the human race in its weakness and ignorance, but peculiarly the disciples of Jesus, who continually need his personal care to protect, to guide, and to feed in his green pastures, and rest by the still waters.

And one of them be gone astray. This is the type (1) of the human race, who fell from paradise, and have been wandering since in the wilds of sin, lost and helpless without a Saviour;

[1] Prof. M. B. Riddle.

[2] A poem by Jeremy Taylor compares our sinful hearts to clay, on which God is asked to stamp his image, as a coin receives its impression in the mint.

> "Stamp it, and on this sordid metal make
> Thy holy image and it shall outshine
> The beauty of this golden mine."

[3] Tennyson's *The Ancient Sage*. See Ruskin's illustration of the black factory mud changed into diamond, opal, sapphire, and snow crystal. — *Modern Painters*, vol. v.

13 And if so be that he find it, verily I say unto you, he rejoiceth over it more of that *sheep*, than of over the ninety and nine which went have not gone astray.

14 Even so *c* it is not the will of your Father which is in heaven, that one of these little ones should perish.

15 ¶ *d* Moreover And if thy brother shall trespass sin against thee, *e* go, and tell shew him his fault between thee and him alone: if he shall hear thee, thou hast *f* gained thy brother.

16 But if he will not hear *thee*, then not, take with thee one or two more, that *g* in at the mouth of two witnesses or three witnesses every word may be established.

c John 6. 39 & 10. 28. Cp. John 17. 12. *d* Luke 17. 3. *e* 2 Thess. 3. 15. Cp. Tit. 3. 10 & James 5. 19. See Lev. 19. 17. *f* 1 Cor. 9. 19–22. 1 Pet. 3. 1. *g* Deut. 19. 15. 2 Cor. 13. 1. Cp. Num. 35. 30 & John 8. 17 & 1 Tim. 5. 19 & Heb. 10. 28.

(2) of the sinner going away from a loving Shepherd, wandering at his own will after forbidden delights, till he is lost in the wilderness of sin and surrounded by a thousand dangers, suffering from hunger and thirst, unable to find the way back, yet sure to perish unless he does. (3) Of the disciple who sometimes in his weakness goes astray from the paths of righteousness, and from his life of faith and close communion with God.[1]

Leave the ninety and nine in their wide, grassy pastures, **and goeth into the mountains**, wild, rocky, and dangerous. Many scholars think the comma in the Greek is in the wrong place, put there by Robert Stephens in one of the earlier versions, and that the sentence should read "leave the ninety and nine on the mountains" on whose slopes they were feeding, "and goeth" into the fastnesses and ravines **and seeketh that which is gone astray.** In Palestine "at any moment sheep are liable to be swept away by some mountain torrent, or carried off by hill robbers, or torn by wolves. At any moment their protector may have to save them by personal hazard. The shepherd king tells us how, in defence of his father's flock, he slew a lion and a bear. Every hour of the shepherd's life is risk. Pitiless showers, driving snows, long hours of thirst, — all this he must endure." [2]

"But none of the ransomed ever knew
How deep were the waters crossed,
Nor how dark was the night that the Lord passed through
Ere he found his sheep that was lost.
Out in the desert he heard its cry, —
Sick and helpless, and ready to die."

13. **If so be that he find it.** Luke says that he seeks until he finds it. **He rejoiceth more of that sheep.** This sheep is of no more value than the others, but its rescue opens the fountains of joy. And he calls all to rejoice with him. Heaven is full of joy at the repentant sinner (Luke), because he is saved from measureless woe and unfathomed depths of sin to blessedness and holiness beyond the power of the heart to conceive.

14. **Even so.** As the good shepherd did so much for a lost and helpless sheep. **It is not the will of your Father which is in heaven.** He desires that all shall repent and be saved. He has done everything possible to wisdom and love, at the greatest cost, to save them. So we, like him, are to care for the little ones, the children, the lowly, the wanderers, those farthest away. This is the joy and the duty of the church.

VII. THE WAY TO TREAT THOSE WHO INJURE US, vers. 15–18.

Compare Luke 17 : 3.

This is closely connected with the earlier part of the chapter on offences.

15. **If thy brother shall trespass**, a usual word for sin. **Against thee.** Some manuscripts omit these words, making the statement more general, but it must especially include and apply to sins against ourselves. **Go and tell** (ἔλεγξον), prove to him, show his fault, "cross-examine with a view of convincing." It is more than "shew" of the R. V. **Between thee and him alone**, privately. If our object is to gain our brother and help him to do right, we will not make known the wrong to others, make it a matter of notoriety; for that makes the settlement far more difficult. His pride, or even self-respect, will tend to keep him from acknowledging his fault. This is a most important principle. The wise head of a great asylum told me that in dealing with the insane it was of the utmost importance to keep away the audience; and that almost every one was influenced by the presence of others. The wisest teacher of my acquaintance deals in the same way with his boys. Deal with them alone whenever it is possible. Thus thy brother will be most likely to **hear thee**, and **thou hast gained thy brother**, gained him for righteousness, for salvation, for a Christian life, and probably as a friend.

16. **But if he will not hear thee**, if this first plan fails, try the next best. **Then take with**

[1] Compare the poem *Beautiful Snow*.

[2] Robertson's *Sermons*.

17 And if he [shall neglect / refuse] to hear them, [h] tell [it] unto the church: [but / and] if he [neglect / refuse] to hear the church [also,] [i] let him be unto thee as [an / the] [j] [heathen man / Gentile] and [a / the] [j] publican.

18 Verily I say unto you, [k] [Whatsoever / What things soever] ye shall bind on earth shall be bound in heaven: and [whatsoever / what things soever] ye shall loose on earth shall be loosed in heaven.

19 Again I say unto you, [That / that] if two of you shall [l] agree on earth as touching [any thing / anything] that they shall ask, [m] it shall be done for them of my Father which is in heaven.

20 For where two or three are [n] gathered together in my name, [o] there am I in the midst of them.

h Cp. 1 Cor. 5. 4, 5 & 6. 1–6. *i* Cp. Rom. 16. 17 & 1 Cor. 5. 9–13 & 2 Thess. 3. 6, 14 & 2 John 10. *j* ch. 5. 46, 47. *k* Cp. ch. 16. 19 & John 20. 23. *l* Cp. Acts 12. 5, 12 & Philem. 22. *m* See ch. 7. 7. *n* Cp. Acts 4. 30, 31 & 1 Cor. 5. 4. *o* Cp. ch. 28. 20 & John 12. 26 & 20. 20, 26.

thee one or two more. The wisest and most friendly you can find, and those whom he respects. **Witnesses.** For you and for him; that the question may be seen from all points of view, misunderstandings be corrected, and if necessary that they may testify before the church.

17. **If he shall neglect to hear them, tell it unto the church.** Either to the whole body, or usually better to their official representatives. The object in all cases is not to get rid of an unworthy member, but to gain him, to save him, which is a much more difficult and much better work. I know the dean of a great university who governs the students on these principles, and who has usually on hand twenty-five or thirty students whom he is dealing with privately, giving them another chance, and telling them that the discipline is known to himself alone, and will not be reported to the faculty unless he is compelled to do so by their refusal to repent and reform. Thus he gains and saves many an offender whom another course would have ruined.

If he neglect, refuse, **to hear**, to pay regard to the decision of **the church**, the local body of believers, or, if it be of wide importance, to the church in general. **Let him be unto thee as an heathen man**, Gentile, **and a publican.** He is not to be treated any more as a recognized Christian brother, for he has shown himself not to be one. This does not mean that we are to scorn him, or hate him. For we are to love Gentiles and publicans and do all we can to save and help them. We are to act lovingly, winningly, mercifully. "The heathen and publicans were subjected to no penalties of any sort in Judea; religious persecution was utterly foreign to the spirit of their institutions. The Jews simply had no intercourse with them. The command, Let him be *unto thee* as a heathen and a publican, does not therefore justify civil penalties or disabilities of any description, . . . nor call for any public condemnation or general obloquy, nor for any formal act of excommunication, or any ecclesiastical pains or penalties." [1]

18. **Whatsoever ye shall bind on earth.** (See on 16:19.) Your righteous discipline shall be recognized in heaven. If you act on the principles I have here laid down, you will be guided to such decisions as are approved in heaven, and which therefore will stand.

NOTE. Most difficulties between Christian brothers would be settled if all used this method of settling them.

Many more would be prevented; for few would enter into actions that require so much care and labor, and personal work, and such a spirit for their settlement. The spirit that would lead to the observance of this method is one that would keep people from trespassing on others' rights.

VIII. THE POWER OF UNITED PRAYER, vers. 19, 20.

The subject just under discussion was very difficult to put into practice, and needed the divine guidance and help in the utmost degree. This was especially necessary when the questions should come before the church, which was to "bind or loose."

19. **If two of you**, if even two of you, **agree on earth as touching any thing that they shall ask.** Always, of course, with the underlying petition in all true prayer, "thy will be done," so that what is asked would result in the advancement of the kingdom of God, and in the best interests of man. **Then it shall be done for them of my Father which is in heaven.** Why? 20. **For where two or three are gathered together in my name, there am I in the midst of them.** Thus he can guide them, influence them to ask the right things, inspire them with right motives, comforting and strengthening them with his presence.

[1] Lyman Abbott.

21 ¶ Then came Pē′tẽr, [to him,] and said [to him,] Lord, how oft [p]shall my brother sin against me, and I forgive him? [q][till] until seven times?

22 Jē′sus saith unto him, I say not unto thee, Until seven times; but, Until [r]seventy times seven.

23 Therefore is the kingdom of heaven likened unto a certain king, which would [s][take account of] make a reckoning with his servants.

24 And when he had begun to reckon, one was brought unto him, which owed him [t]ten thousand [u]talents.

p ver. 15. *q* Luke 17. 3, 4. Cp. Col. 3. 13. *r* Gen. 4. 24 (Gk.) (for mg.). *s* ch. 25. 19. *t* Esth. 3. 9. *u* ch. 25. 15.

WHY ARE TWO OR THREE AGREEING TOGETHER more likely to receive answers to prayer?

(1) They are more likely to ask for the best things for the kingdom.

(2) They mutually encourage each other in faith and earnestness. Two firebrands together make a larger, hotter flame than if they were separated.

(3) It is possible to give fuller answers and larger blessings to the many than to the few. The answer is "to prayer by kindred spirits, members of one family, servants of one Lord, constrained by the same love, fighting under one banner, cheered by assurances of the same victory; a living and loving union, whose voice in the Divine ear is as the sound of many waters."[1]

IX. FORGIVING OTHERS: ILLUSTRATED BY THE PARABLE OF THE TWO DEBTORS, vers. 21–35.

This is closely allied to the discussions in the previous verses of the chapter. Offences against others, the actions that tempted them to sin, would often take the form of doing some injury to them. Jesus therefore immediately follows his teachings against committing offence, with instructions as to what to do toward those who trespass against us. "The Rabbis, their teachers hitherto, required an offender to go to the injured party, and obtain forgiveness by owning his fault; but Jesus told them that among his disciples the person wronged was to go to the wrong-doer, that such humility and love might strengthen his own graces, and win the guilty one to contrition."[2] This was a hard saying, but by united prayer this spirit, as well as every other blessing, could be obtained. But wrongs to others, real or fancied, are very common, and Peter naturally asks how long one must carry out this instruction toward those who keep on sinning and apparently repenting.

21. **Then came Peter to him.** Bishop Warren suggests that the "preceding discourse on forgiveness had so stirred up Peter that he put it into practice. Found fault with often, as impetuous men are apt to be, he asks how long he is to bear it. The Rabbis said forgiveness was to be exercised three times." Compare Amos 2: 4 and Job 33: 29 (margin), from which the rule was derived. Peter therefore said, **How oft shall my brother sin against me, and I forgive him?** How long should he continue to apply the same remedy that failed again and again? **Till seven times?** "Is seven times sufficient?" To do that seemed a great stretch of virtue, far beyond that of the Rabbis. But he did not get hold of the true principle of forgiveness.

22. **I say not unto thee, Until seven times: but, Until seventy times seven.** "It is doubtful whether the original means four hundred and ninety or seventy-seven (seventy times seven or 'seventy times and seven,' as in margin of R. V.). But in either case it is a symbolical expression for never-ending forgiveness. Love is not to be limited by the multiplication table."[3] Forgiveness is *qualitative*, not *quantitative*.

SCENE I. THE KING AND THE GREAT DEBTOR.

23. **Therefore.** In order to illustrate the duty of forgiveness. **A certain king, which would take account of.** Better as R. V., "make a reckoning with" **his servants,** his officers, as governors or nobles who were farmers of taxes. "The picture is drawn from an Oriental court. The provincial governors, farmers of taxes, and other high officials are summoned before a despotic sovereign to give an account of their administration."[4]

24. **One was brought unto him.** Unwillingly; such a debtor could not come of his own accord. **Which owed him ten thousand talents.** A talent was a weight, not a coin. Hence a talent of gold would naturally be worth about sixteen times as much as a talent of silver. According to the *Oxford Helps*, a Hebrew silver talent was worth 3000 shekels, or 12,000 denarii (the pence of ver. 28). The 10,000 talents would, therefore, be worth $19,000,000 or $20,000,000, a sum

[1] Dr. Brown. [2] Maclaren. [3] Prof. Schaff. [4] *Cambridge Bible.*

25 *t* But forasmuch as he had not *wherewith* to pay, his lord commanded him *u* to be sold, and his wife, and *v* children, and all that he had, and payment to be made.

26 The servant therefore fell down *w* and *y* worshipped him, saying, Lord, have patience with me, and I will pay thee all.

27 Then And the lord of that servant, was being moved with compassion, and loosed released him, and *v* forgave him the debt.

28 But the same that servant went out, and found one of his fellowservants, fellow-servants, which owed him an a hundred *z* pence: and he laid hands hold on him, and took *him* by the throat, saying, Pay me that what thou owest.

v Cp. Luke 7. 42. *w* Ex. 21. 2. Lev. 25. 39. *x* 2 Kin. 4. 1. Neh. 5. 5. *y* Acts 10. 25. See ch. 8. 2. *z* ch. 20. 2 & 22. 19. Mark 6. 37 & 14. 5. Luke 7. 41 & 10. 35. John 6. 7. Rev. 6. 6, *al.*

impossible to pay. A Greek talent would be about half as much.

"In Syria and Palestine money is lent to private individuals and villages at the usurious rates of from 20 to 60 per cent. For a few years the usurer, by hard and prompt measures, secures the stipulated interest, but after a little the debtor becomes a defaulter, and then the growth of the capital at compound interest becomes so enormous that there is not the slightest hope of its ever being paid. The 10,000 talents of the parable has staggered the literalist commentators, and the amount, whether reckoned by the Attic or Jewish standards, is very great; but it has its parallel in Syria to-day in accumulated debts that can never be paid, and in posted ledgers on the pages of which the figures increase and swarm like bees. About thirty years ago bonds were issued on the city of Damascus at 18 per cent. The interest was unpaid, and it is likely to remain unpaid, but it is yearly added to the original bonds, and by compound interest it has reached a total that is almost fabulous. The creditors are all now millionaires — on paper."

25. **Commanded him to be sold . . . and all that he had.** So in Syria now, when the debt grows till it equals in value the entire property of the debtors, the creditor seizes all they possess. "Their houses and lands become his, and they, in their new relationship, work for him as his serfs and slaves. And such property he can sell, the men, their wives, and children passing practically as chattels." [1] "I believe the people of Palestine dread the tax-gatherer and the moneylender more than they do the cholera or the conscription for war." [2]

26. **Worshipped him.** Prostrated himself before him.

27. **Loosed him** (released him), **and forgave him the debt.** There was no other way of deliverance.

THE KING, of course, represents God himself.

THE SERVANTS, or officers, are all to whom God has committed great blessings and opportunities, and high trusts, — as the Gospel, the Word of God, the knowledge of Jesus Christ, a clear sense of duty, a conscience, the Holy Spirit, talents, wealth, influence, everything by which they can serve God, help men, and grow into holy character.

THE RECKONING is not merely the last judgment, but every time when God brings to man's heart a consciousness of his sin, by his Holy Spirit, by troubles and the consequences of wrongdoing, by heart-searchings that lead to desires of escape from sin.

THE DEBT OF SIN. The immense debt of this guilty officer "represents the magnitude of the debt which the sinner owes to God, and the hopelessness of ever paying it." "Sins are compared to debts, because they represent all that duty and love which we owe to God, but have never by our past lives paid." [3] This debt is infinite, because it is committed against so great a God; against infinite love and goodness. It is not only wicked but mean in its ingratitude. Its consequences are immeasurable.

SCENE II. THE GREAT DEBTOR AND THE SMALL DEBTOR. Vers. 28–30. 28. **The same servant went out.** From his king's presence. He could not commit the outrage which follows in the presence of his benefactor. He must first forget him. **And found one of his fellowservants.** An inferior officer. **Owed him an hundred pence.** "Shillings" or "francs" would give us a better idea of the sum than pence. The silver penny, worth about the same as a denarius, the "penny" of the Bible, was the common coin among the Anglo-Saxons, and was in use, in reduced weight, at the time our Bible was translated. Copper pennies were not coined till 1797. A hundred pence were worth $16 or $17, about one millionth part of the debt the unmerciful servant had owed the king.[1] **Took**

[1] Dr. William Wright in *Sunday-School Times.* [2] Hon. Selah Merrill. [3] Lyman Abbott.

29 And so his fellowservant fell down at his feet, and besought him, saying, Have patience with me, and I will pay thee all.

30 And he would not: but went and cast him into prison, till he should pay the debt. that which was due.

31 So when his fellowservants saw what was done, they were very sorry, and came and told unto their lord all that was done.

32 Then his lord after that he had called him said unto him, and saith to him, O thou wicked servant, I forgave thee all that debt, because thou desiredst me:

33 [a] Shouldest thou not also have had compassion on thy fellowservant, even as I had pity on thee?

34 [b] And his lord was wroth, and delivered him to the tormentors, [c] till he should pay all that was due. unto him.

35 [d] So likewise shall my heavenly Father do also unto you, if ye from your hearts forgive not every one his brother [e] their trespasses. from your hearts.

a Cp. ch. 6. 12 & Eph. 4. 32 & Col. 3. 13 & 1 John 4. 11. *b* See James 2. 13. *c* ver. 30. Cp. ch. 5. 25, 26. *d* ch. 6. 15. Cp. Prov. 21. 13. *e* 1 Pet. 1. 22. Cp. Rom. 6. 17.

him by the throat. This brutal custom was Roman and not Jewish, but has its counterpart in Syria to-day.

29. **Fell down at his feet, . . . I will pay thee all.** The very act and words he himself had so lately employed to his creditor. And this fellow-servant could pay in time, for it was only about three months' wages that he owed, while he himself could never have paid his debt.

30. **And he would not: but went** (went away) **and cast him into prison.** "When the threshing season comes round, the usurious creditor secures the services of a band of bashibazouks. These ride into the defaulting village, stable their horses in the people's houses, lie in their beds, eat their fowl and fatted sheep, insult their wives and daughters, till the usurer is satisfied. Should the debtors be unwilling or unable to pay, they are handcuffed and driven like cattle to prison, whence they shall not depart till they have paid the uttermost farthing." [2]

Applications. He had many reasons in his own mind, as (1) that the man deserved the punishment; (2) it was his own fault that he was in debt; (3) it was not good for the community that such men go unpunished. But not one of these did he want applied to himself.

1. The man who is most sinful toward God is apt to be the hardest in dealing with those who sin against himself.

2. The sins which others commit against us are very small and few compared with those which we commit against God.

Scene III. The King and the Two Debtors. 31. **His fellowservants.** The scene changes again. The other servants felt great pity for the unfortunate man, and **told unto their lord,** who they were sure would listen, since he had been so compassionate toward the first debtor. They were not revengeful, but grieved and disappointed at the oppression of the weak, and the monstrous ingratitude of the officer.

32. **O thou wicked servant.** Hard-hearted, hypocritical, ungrateful, selfish.

34. **And his lord was wroth.** Angry, indignant, and justly so, at such misconduct. **Delivered him to the tormentors.** Not simply "jailers," but those who (among the ancient Romans) sought by legal tortures to find out whether the debtor had any concealed hoard.[3] "The bashibazouks (referred to under ver. 30) prod them along with their spears till the blood runs down their backs; and sometimes they are dragged along by ropes, running when the horses hurry along, till they not infrequently fall by the way. The prison where these men are caged from the open air is a pestiferous sty, and their treatment there is cruel and merciless in proportion to the influence of the creditor. The tormentors had other methods, till quite recently, of obtaining money from their victims, such as the extraction of teeth and the slitting of ears and noses." [2]

35. **So likewise shall my heavenly Father do also unto you, if ye from your hearts.** Not merely in form and in words, but from sincere love, with true forgiveness. (1) Forgiveness only injured the man, confirmed him in sin, and made him proud and selfish. Therefore love to him must express itself in punishment as the only way

[1] Dr. Broadus. [2] Dr. William Wright. [3] See Livy, ii. 23.

to touch his heart and save him from his sin. (2) God's anger is not passion, but a righteous burning indignation against sin. A good God must loathe and abhor every form of sin. (3) The forgiveness of the first debtor was a test whether he was fitted to receive forgiveness. He failed in the test. The only way we can know that we are forgiven by God is by the heart that forgives. So in the Lord's Prayer, we can only ask to be forgiven as we forgive.[1]

What the Law of Forgiveness requires may be best learned from the way God forgives sins.

1. Always and under all circumstances we must have a forgiving heart, whatever the offence against us or the attitude of the offender, never the spirit of hate, or revenge, or retaliation. Never brood over wrongs; make all possible allowances and excuses.

> "Heir of the same inheritance,
> Child of the selfsame God,
> He hath but stumbled in the path
> We have in weakness trod."

"I have known a man nurse the tiny cockatrice egg of unforgiveness till it has burst into the fiery serpent of crime."[2] When Jesus bids us forgive seventy times seven times, it means as many times as the sins against us. Our hearts are like reservoirs, and outward occasions draw out whatever is within, and only that. If they are full of love, forgiveness, kindness, the desire to help, then no matter how often, seven times or seventy times seven, some act of others calls forth the feelings of the heart, it will be met by love, forgiveness, and help. If hate or revenge is there, then hate or revenge will flow forth against the evil-doer.[3]

2. The forgiving spirit seeks to do all the good possible to the one who has wronged us. It yearns to help and to save him from his sin. It proves this feeling of forgiveness and love by doing good, as God sends the rain and the sunshine on the evil and on the good; as Jesus wept over Jerusalem, and did everything possible to save the city from its fate, even when it was about to crucify him. So twice repeated is the command, "If thine enemy hunger, feed him," etc. (Prov. 25: 21, 22; Rom. 12: 20, 21.)

3. The object of forgiveness is the deliverance of ourselves and others from sin. The forgiving spirit does this (1) by keeping evil from our own hearts (revenge, hate, anger) and giving us the victory over ourselves; (2) by influencing others to repent and forsake their sin. Hate inflames hate, but love kindles love.

4. It follows from the aim of forgiveness that it must manifest itself in different ways under different circumstances. Punishment of the incorrigible is not inconsistent with forgiving love. If the wild beast will not become tame, love says that it *must* be chained. If men will not repent, then for the safety of the world they must be punished. "There is no virtue in simply permitting a man to wrong you as often as he chooses, forgiving him, and doing nothing more."[4]

5. But if the sinner repents, then the forgiveness is full and free. It harbors no grudge. The acquittal is perfect. The debt is blotted out. The enemy becomes a friend. The wanderer is restored to the family, as if he had never sinned. "You do not proclaim the sin from the housetops."

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[1] See "The Prayer of the Unforgiving Man" in Arbp. Hare's *Alton Sermons*. [2] Farrar.

[3] See Arbp. Whately's *Annotations*. "Portia's famous description of mercy in *The Merchant of Venice* is really a fine analysis of the spirit of forgiveness."

[4] William Arnot.

CHAPTER 19.

SECTION XVIII.—THE PEREAN MINISTRY, CHAPTERS 19, 20.

Recorded chiefly by Luke, chapters 10 to 19, and Matthew, chapters 19, 20; Mark, chapter 10.

1. JESUS LEAVES GALILEE; END OF THE GALILEAN MINISTRY, vers. 1, 2.
2. QUESTIONS CONCERNING DIVORCE AND THE FAMILY, vers. 3–12.
3. JESUS BLESSING LITTLE CHILDREN, vers. 13–15.
4. A YOUNG RULER SEEKING ETERNAL LIFE, vers. 16–30.

Time.

November, A. D. 29, to the last of April, A. D. 30.

Place.

Perea.

1 AND it came to pass' *that* when Jē′s̱us had finished these sayings, words, he departed
from [f] Ḡăl′ĭ-lee, and [g] came [h] into the coasts borders of Jū-dæ′ȧ beyond Jôr′da̱n;
2 And and [i] great multitudes followed him; and he healed them there.
3 ¶ The Phar′i-sees also came unto him, And there came unto him Phar′i-sees, [j] tempting him, and saying, unto him, [k] Is it lawful
for a man *for a man* to put away his wife for every cause?

f ch. 17. 24. *g* For vers. 1–9, see Mark 10. 1–12. *h* Luke 9. 51 & 17. 11. John 10. 40. Cp. ch. 4. 25. *i* ch. 12. 15. *j* See [John 8. 6]. *k* ch. 5. 31.

I. THE CLOSE OF THE GALILEAN MINISTRY. JESUS' FINAL DEPARTURE FROM GALILEE, vers. 1, 2.

TIME. November or December A. D. 29. About four months before the crucifixion.

PLACE. From Galilee to Perea and Judea.

PARALLELS. Mark 10: 1; Luke 9: 51, 52.

1. **When Jesus had finished these sayings.** His private instructions to his disciples during the past few weeks. **He departed from Galilee.** "Departed" is not merely "went away," but removed. He had completed his Galilean ministry, as nearly two years before he had completed his Judean ministry. He now begins his third great ministry, that of Perea, *i. e.*, "the region beyond" Jordan.

Came into the coasts. "Better as R. V., "borders"; though it is easy to see how the translation *coasts* arose, *coast* being derived from the Latin *costa*, *a side*, and hence a *border* generally, though now applied to the seaside only."[1] **Of Judæa beyond Jordan.** "The Greek construction is peculiar, but makes 'beyond Jordan' state the route by which he came into the borders of Judea."[2] This statement covers the whole Perean ministry, lasting four or five months, from the close of the Galilean ministry to the last week of his life. Prof. Swete makes it include also the visit to Jerusalem at the Feast of Tabernacles, reported by John in three and a half chapters (7: 1 to 10: 21).

2. **And great multitudes followed him.** He now resumes his more public teaching. Jesus had not hitherto spent much time in Perea, but the people had heard of him, for he had become widely known; and they came in crowds to see and hear him. **And he healed them there.** He worked here the same kind of miracles which had characterized his labors in Galilee.

PEREA was bordered on the west by the Jordan. Its eastern boundaries were undefined. It extended northward from the Arnon about sixty miles, and included the country of Gilead. "Modern travellers speak of the great richness of the soil." "No one can fairly judge of Israel's heritage who has not seen the luxuriance of Gilead. To compare Judea with it is to contrast nakedness and luxuriance."[3] There was a large population and many villages. The population was a mixed one, of Jews and Gentiles. We learn from John that "many believed on him there."

II. A QUESTION CONCERNING DIVORCE LEADS TO FUNDAMENTAL TEACHINGS CONCERNING THE FAMILY, vers. 3–12.

TIME. March, A. D. 30. Near the close of the Perean ministry.

PLACE. Perea, east of the Jordan, on the way to Jerusalem.

PARALLEL. Mark 10: 2–12.

Compare Matt. 5: 31, 32; and Deut. 24: 1–4.

3. **The Pharisees also,** with the crowd, came

[1] Prof. M. R. Vincent, *Word Studies.* [2] Prof. Broadus. [3] Canon Tristram.

4 And he answered and said, unto them, *l* Have ye not read, that he which made *them* at from the beginning made them male and female,

5 And and said, *m* For this cause shall a man leave his father and mother, and shall cleave to his wife: and *n* they the twain shall be become one flesh?

6 Wherefore So that they are no more twain, but one flesh. *o* What therefore God hath joined together, let not man put asunder.

l Gen. 1. 27 & 2. 18, 21-23 & 5. 2. Cp. ch. 21. 16. *m* Eph. 5. 31. Cited from Gen. 2. 24. *n* 1 Cor. 6. 16. Cp. Mal. 2. 15. *o* 1 Cor. 7. 10.

unto him, tempting him; better, trying him, or putting him to a test by proposing to him one of the puzzling questions which divided the Pharisees.

The law, in Deut. 24: 1–4, permitted divorce under certain restrictive forms, when a man "found some unseemly thing in her." The statement is quite general.

The stricter school, that of Shammai, interpreted this to apply only to cases of adultery. The more "liberal" school of Hillel decided that it permitted divorce for any cause that made the wife distasteful to her husband.

Jesus as a great Rabbi was asked to give a decision. It may be that they wished to entrap Jesus by placing him in a dilemma. Whichever way he decided he would make enemies. On the one hand his decision could be construed as opposed to the law of Moses, and so to the stricter school of the Pharisees; and on the other, the people might be opposed to the restrictions of a strict interpretation, and be distasteful to Herod and Herodias, whose castle of Macherus was not far away. But Jesus in his discussion went down to the fundamental principles of the family, as a divine institution, and instead of merely answering a puzzling question, taught a great truth, the understanding of which led to correct answers to all such questions.

Is it lawful for a man to put away his wife for every cause? That is, for all the causes which the loose school of Hillel allowed; in distinction from the one cause, unchastity, allowed by the stricter school of Shammai.

4. **Have ye not read,** in Gen. 1: 27, the very first chapter of their Scriptures, **that he which made them,** and therefore knew what he made them for, and what was best for them, at, from, **the beginning made them male and female?** "The regulations of Moses were temporary expedients and merely permissive. But now go back of Moses to nature itself. Learn its facts, and get their meaning. The root of it all is in sex, — the deepest fact, except that of life, of the natural man. Whether realized immediately in creation, or by slow evolution, nature leads to the union of one man with one woman as the true form of marriage. Sex is its physical basis, its bodily form. From this springs the affection that gives it spiritual vitality, and this affection with the physical relation are as soul and body in the individual man."[1]

5. **And said** (Gen. 2: 22, 23), **For this cause.** Because this is the closest possible relation between two beings, both physically and spiritually a closer bond than that between children and parents. Hence **shall a man leave father and mother, and shall cleave to his wife,** literally, "shall be glued to her;" glue often uniting two pieces of wood so firmly that the wood itself will part more easily than the joining between the two pieces.

And they twain shall be, shall become, shall be into, **one flesh.** "The sexual act unites them, makes them one, the same as the junction of two streams makes one river; the union of hydrogen and oxygen in certain proportions makes one substance, water; the mechanical joining of different parts fitted to each other makes the one structure. . . . The duality no longer exists; it has been replaced by this structural unity."[2] As, for instance, the separate, individual wheels of a watch united together form a unity, a watch, a higher unity than that of each wheel with the brass from which it was taken. They cannot be separated without destroying the watch. They are not merged one wheel into another, as one old theory of marriage regarded the wife as merged into the husband, but the wheels form a new structural unity, as "husband and wife become coördinate members of an organic unity with equalities and differences."[3]

6. **Wherefore they are no more twain, but one flesh.** "They become a unity in the flesh; that is, so long as the physical life of the two continues. As related to each other, they are no

[1] Rev. Samuel W. Dike, LL. D., secretary of the *National League for the Protection of the Family*, and a leading authority on social questions of divorce.

[2] Prof. Ezra P. Gould, S. T. D., in the *Int. Crit. Com.* on Mark.

[3] "Jesus to a surprising degree anticipated to-day's belief in the equality of the sexes." Prof. Shailer Mathews, *The Social Teaching of Jesus*, "The Family."

7 They say unto him, *p* Why then did Mō'şeş then command to give a writing bill of divorcement, and to put her away?

8 He saith unto them, Mō'şeş because of the for your *q* hardness of your hearts heart suffered you to put away your wives: but from the beginning it was not hath not been so.

9 *r* And I say unto you, Whosoever shall put away his wife, except it be for

p Deut. 24. 1–4. *q* Mark 16. 14. Cp. Mark 3. 5 & 6. 52 & Heb. 3. 8. *r* See ch. 5. 32.

longer two absolute individuals, nor has one been lost in the other, but they both realize personality in a unity that is more than the mere sum of its parts." [1]

What therefore God hath joined together. "The act of joining together is God's, since the constitution that underlies it is his, . . . and he has written this law of man's physical being in his spiritual nature, so that what tends in brutes to indiscriminate intercourse, tends in man to the indissoluble and sacred bond of marriage. Jesus nowhere shows the absolute rationality and verity of his thought more than here. Spirituality is the very core of that thought, but it never misleads him so that he misses the material facts. And it is the insistence on these here that saves him from an immoral sentimentality. Whatever may underlie marriage in the realm of the feelings, it is itself physical, and produces structural unity. And about that, for the profoundest reasons, God gathers all the holiest feelings, and by solemn sanction confines them within that circle. Except for that confinement, the feelings themselves lose their sacredness, and become unhallowed and profane." [2]

Let not man put asunder. For "divorce is not the undoing of an agreement, but the destruction of a vital bond. It is not a remedy, but a capital infliction. Death, and perhaps adultery, is the only truly natural end of the relation created by marriage (cf. Matt. 22: 30). Thus the captious question about divorce gets an answer that outlines the family in terms that science respects. Then comes the word of divine authority, "What God hath joined together, let not man put asunder." Let neither polygamous nor illicit unions violate the fundamental principles of the family, to which marriage is but the door. Let not licentiousness, a dual sin, corrupt its physical basis. Let neither free love nor a loveless domestic life destroy its soul. And let not the supposed interests of church or state, or school or industry, weaken its activities, nor unholy divorce cut off its life before its natural end. Here is the truth of the family for all time." [1]

7. Why did Moses then, if this principle be true, and the marriage tie is made by God, and man forbidden to try to dissolve it, **command to give a writing** (βιβλίον). The word is a diminutive of βίβλος (of which our word "Bible" is a transcript), the inner bark of the papyrus plant (from which our word "paper" comes). Hence it means a *paper* or *bill*, in the form of a roll, in which form all written documents were then prepared. **A writing of divorcement, and to put her away.** See Deut. 24: 1–4. The Hebrew law did not institute divorce, it only tolerated it, and used the best means practicable at the time to check it. "The law of Deuteronomy provides three guarantees against rash or arbitrary divorce: (1) a definite and substantial ground must be alleged; (2) a proper legal instrument must be prepared; and (3) the case, it is implied, must be brought before some public functionary," and other forms must be observed. "It is evident that the time and expense involved in these formalities would tend to check a divorce suit being rashly instituted; the husband would have opportunity for reconsideration, and the intervention of a public magistrate would prevent proceedings being instituted on wanton or frivolous grounds." [3]

8. Moses because of the hardness of your hearts, the hard, stubborn, harsh, set state of your moral nature, belonging to a rude, spiritually uncultured race, so sensual as not to realize the highest spiritual good. "It was in vain, therefore, to make an opposite condition (to the actual hardness of heart) of moral being an essential condition of political existence. Had the attempt been made, universal violation of the laws, or universal extermination of the people, would have been the result. The polity could not have stood for a single day. If, then, a perfect marital law had been insisted on, it would have been unworkable." [4]

But from the beginning, the original constitution of man, and the original plan and law, **it was not so,** it hath not been so, "the verb is in the perfect tense (denoting the continuance of past action or its results down to the present). He means: Notwithstanding Moses' permission, . . . the original ordinance has never been abrogated nor superseded, but continues in force." [5]

9. Whosoever shall put away his wife except . . . for fornication, including adultery.

[1] Rev. S. W. Dike, LL. D.
[2] Prof. Ezra P. Gould, *Int. Crit. Com.*
[3] Prof. S. R. Driver, *Int. Crit. Com.* on Deuteronomy.
[4] Morison.
[5] Prof. M. R. Vincent.

fornication, and shall marry another, committeth adultery: and [whoso] [he that] marrieth her [which] [when she] is put away [doth commit] [committeth] adultery.

10 ¶ [His] [The] disciples say unto him, If the case of the man [be] [is] so with [his] [his] wife, it is not [good] [expedient] to marry.

11 But he said unto them, [s] All [men] [men] cannot receive this saying, [save] [t they] [but they] to [u] whom it is given.

12 For there are [some] eunuchs, which were so born from [their] [their] mother's womb: and there are [some] eunuchs, which were made eunuchs [of] [by] men: and there [be] [are] eunuchs, [v] which [have] made themselves eunuchs for the kingdom of heaven's sake. He that is able to receive [it] [it], let him receive [it] [it].

13 ¶ [w] Then were there brought unto him little children, that he should [put] [lay] [his] [his] hands on them, and pray: and the disciples [x] rebuked them.

s 1 Cor. 7. 2, 7–9, 17. *t* Cp. ch. 20. 23. *u* ch. 13. 11. *v* Cp. 1 Cor. 7. 32. *w* For vers. 13–15, see Mark 10. 13–16 & Luke 18. 15–17. *x* Mark 10. 48.

Unchastity, and that alone, breaks the marriage unity. So that when the union is dissolved in fact, it is right to dissolve it in form and by human law; which law does not destroy the unity, but simply recognizes that it has already been destroyed. **And shall marry another, committeth adultery.** That is, he breaks the marriage tie, which was not dissolved and could not be by any legal form whatsoever. "There is nothing in his teachings that would lead us to believe Jesus disapproved of the separation of a married pair for other causes than the one which would justify divorce. But remarriage on the part of either husband or wife who are thus separated would be regarded by him as a violation of the marriage union that still exists between them."[1]

10. **His disciples say**, privately, **If the case of the man be so with his wife.** That is, if a man cannot easily put away his wife, when he no longer loves her, and must put up with all other vices or disagreeable qualities except the one mentioned. **Then it is not good**, expedient, **to marry.** They looked at the question exclusively from the man's standpoint.

11, 12. **But he said unto them, All men cannot receive**, make room for, **this saying.** Not Christ's saying about divorce, but the apostle's saying, "It is not expedient to marry." This is the necessary grammatical construction;[2] and Jesus would not deny or limit the great eternal principle he had laid down. **Save they to whom it is given.** Jesus does not question that for some it may be inexpedient to marry, for whose action there are reasons in the providence of God. These are exceptional cases. Some cannot marry from natural causes, and some **for the kingdom of heaven's sake**, in accordance with "one of the fundamental teachings of his entire system, viz., that a good thing must always be sacrificed to a better. . . . While marriage is supremely good, yet if for any cause it stand in the way of accepting the blessings of the kingdom of heaven, it is to be avoided. . . . Whether it be to avoid the propagation of an hereditary disease, or criminal proclivity, or whether it be that some great mission in life may be better fulfilled, celibacy may be the only form of life a man should adopt. But the men who have thus **made themselves eunuchs for the kingdom of heaven's sake** are no holier than men who have sacrificed other individual desires and goods for the common weal."[3]

III. JESUS BLESSING LITTLE CHILDREN, vers. 13–15.

TIME. March, A. D. 30.

PLACE. Perea, at the house where Jesus spoke the teaching of vers. 10–12.

PARALLELS. Mark 10: 13–16; Luke 18: 15–17.

From this point to the history of the Passion the three accounts proceed in almost unbroken order.

13. **Then**, most appropriately this incident follows close upon Jesus' teaching concerning the family. **Brought unto him little children.** The Greek word is applied to children from eight days to twelve years old; and probably children of various ages were included in the group brought to Jesus by their mothers. They would remind Jesus of his growing childhood.

There must have been something very attractive about Jesus in his personality, the beauty of his spirit, the charm of his conversation, the love he bore to all. Without doubt he was tasteful and neat in dress, courteous in manner, gentle, tender,

[1] Prof. Shailer Mathews, *Social Teaching of Jesus*, p. 89.

[2] Meyer.

[3] Prof. Shailer Mathews, *Social Teaching of Jesus*, pp. 92, 93.

14 But Jē'sus said, [y] Suffer [the] little children, and [z] forbid them not, to come unto me: for of such is the kingdom of heaven.

15 And he laid [his] hands on them, and departed thence.

16 ¶ [a] And, behold, one came [to him] and said, [unto him, Good] Master, what good thing shall I do, that I may [b] have [c] eternal life?

y ch. 18. 3. *z* Cp. Mark 9. 39. *a* For vers. 16–29, see Mark 10. 17–30 & Luke 18. 18–30. Cp. Luke 10. 25–28.
b Cp. ver. 29. *c* ch. 25. 46. John 3. 15, *al.* Cp. ch. 18. 8.

cheerful, and social, a delightful friend and companion, the ideal man, not only in character, but in manners.

Should put his hands on them, those hands that had been used in many a miracle of healing, and even of raising the dead. The touching would make more real to them the fact of the blessing conveyed in this way, and would be an influential memory to the children all their lives long. **And pray.** Invoke God's blessing upon them; pray for all that could be hoped for in life; that every good should be theirs.

Bringing Children to Jesus. We bring children to Jesus (1) by daily, constant, earnest prayer on their behalf; (2) by teaching them the truth; (3) by consecrating them to God for this life and the life to come; (4) by training them up for Christ from their earliest years, and not waiting till "the plastic nature of childhood is hardened into stone." (5) By a beautiful Christian home life and training. (6) By Sunday-schools, Junior Christian Endeavor Societies, and mothers' meetings. (7) By making religious services so attractive that it will be a pleasure for them to attend.

But when **his disciples** saw it, they **rebuked them.** Found fault with them, and bade them keep away. Morison thinks that the children were included with their mothers, among those reproved by the disciples. They bade the whole group keep away from Jesus, with the emphasis of course on the mothers. They probably thought it beneath Jesus' dignity, and that he ought not to stop his important teachings merely to bless a few children. For Jesus was in the midst of a most solemn and important discourse to older people (vers. 3–12), and the disciples did not wish him to be interrupted by children; but Jesus knew that this very interruption was one of the best enforcements of his teaching.

14. **But Jesus**, moved with indignation (Mark 10: 14) because they so misunderstood his character and his work as to hinder any who wished to come to him, especially children, the hope of the church, and the mothers, the best workers for his kingdom, called them unto him (Luke), taking the children in his arms, and blessing them (Mark). **Said.** "We hear the Lord's indignant call as it startles the disciples in the act of dismissing the party."[1] **Suffer** (permit, let them alone) **little children . . . forbid them not**, emphasizing his command by the repetition, putting it in both the positive and the negative form. **To come unto me.** Because he wanted the little children, and the children needed him. Children may know that they are welcome, for they have a special invitation from Jesus. **For of such**, children, and those who have the spirit represented and symbolized by the ideal childhood; absence of self-will and self-consciousness, humility, teachableness, obedience, perfect trust, and a wealth of warm and expressive affection. **Is the kingdom of heaven.** "The kingdom of heaven is (1) in its *idea*, its essence, the rule and the authority of God; and then (2) *the sphere* in which he bears rule, either in the spirit of the individual man, or the assemblage of its subjects, the society constituted by them. When Jesus speaks of its acceptance, it is the rule which is meant. . . . On the other hand, when he speaks of entrance into it, he means the society of its subjects, the perfect state and order which results from doing the will of God."[2] The last statement of this verse is enforced still further in Mark.

Practical Suggestions. (1.) If Jesus so loves little children, we may well trust to his loving care those of our children whom he takes from us to himself into his heavenly home. (2.) Their helplessness makes us tender; their loveliness surprises us into pure joy. . . A child is a sunbeam on a winter sea, a flower in a prison garden, the music of bells over the noise of a great city, a fragrant odor in a sick-room. If any one thinks this exaggerated, I am sorry for him. It is literally true for me.

IV. A YOUNG RULER SEEKING ETERNAL LIFE, vers. 16–22.

Time. March, A. D. 30. As Jesus was leaving the house.

Parallels. Mark 10: 17–22; Luke 18: 18–23.

The Young Ruler. 16. **And, behold, one came.** As he was going from the house where he had blessed the children (Mark 10: 13–17). He came running (Mark), showing his earnestness. "No common reason will ever lead the

[1] Prof. H. B. Swete.

[2] Prof. Ezra P. Gould in *Int. Crit. Com.*

17 And he said unto him, Why (callest / askest) thou me (concerning that which is) good? (*there is* none / One there is) good but one, *that is*, God: (who is good:) but *d* if thou (wilt / wouldest) enter into life, keep the commandments.

d Lev. 18. 5. Neh. 9. 29. Ezek. 20. 11, 13, 21. Rom. 10. 5. Gal. 3. 12.

Oriental to break his slow, sedate, and dignified walk."[1] "They that will have eternal life must run for it, because the devil, the law, sin, death, and hell follow them."[2]

His Character and Position. 1. He was young, rich, and honored. He was a ruler (Luke), probably of a synagogue, a leading man in Jewish circles.

2. He was religiously trained and acquainted with the law.

3. He had a lovable disposition (Mark), for Jesus was drawn toward him in love.

4. This young man seems to have had, from a worldly point of view, an irreproachable moral character. He had resisted the corrupting influences around him.

5. He was a candid inquirer, breaking away from the routine religion of his synagogue, and recognizing truth and goodness wherever he saw it.

6. He was courageous. Only a brave heart could have enabled one in so prominent a position to risk the opposition and reproaches of his associates, and run and reverence in so public a manner the despised Nazarene.

7. He had high aspirations. He was not content with wealth, and position, and outward morality, but had set his heart on eternal life.

8. He was in earnest, as his conduct shows.

9. He had some knowledge of Jesus, and his teachings, and his miracles.

Seeking Eternal Life. **And said unto him.** As he kneeled before him (Mark). "To kneel as an act of homage, unless as a suppliant, would be, amongst the Mohammedans to-day, a recognition of a sacred or prophetic character, as it was among the Jews. To kneel before our Lord was more than a conventional form of respect; it was a recognition of a spiritual authority above that of priest or Rabbi, especially when combined with the address of 'Good Master,' which it was incorrect to apply to any living man in his presence, and the epithet is never applied, in the *Talmud*, even to the greatest Rabbis."[3]

Good Master (or teacher), **what good thing shall I do.** What act of sacrifice or heroism, what generous action, what penance or suffering? He has the idea of purchasing, of deserving, of inheriting eternal life. **That I may have** (Mark, "inherit") **eternal life**, have it as a permanent possession, in the home of his father.

Eternal Life is much more than eternal existence. It implies happiness, vigor, peace, and all that makes life worth living. It is the divine life which is implanted in us when we are born of the Spirit and become children of God. It begins in this life, but, being divine and natural, it endures forever. It is the life that belongs to heaven, which inspires all heavenly beings and makes heaven what it is. Its outflow is perfect morality and the noblest character.

Seeking Eternal Life. This young man had, more than most people, the good things of this world, and yet he was not satisfied. He realized that his soul was hungering and thirsting after better things. Of all things in the universe, eternal life is the great prize we should seek with all our hearts and souls, for it includes every other good, — God, heaven, holiness, usefulness, happiness. Just so far as we have eternal life can we know God, or heaven, or any highest good. Therefore, like Bunyan's Pilgrim fleeing from the City of Destruction with his fingers in his ears, crying out, "Life, life!" so we should run from the city of Spiritual Death to the city of Eternal Life.

> "Whatever crazy sorrow saith,
> No life that breathes with human breath
> Hath ever truly longed for death.
>
> "'T is *life*, whereof our nerves are scant,
> O life, not death, for which we pant;
> More life, and fuller, that I want."[4]

The Answer of Jesus. 17. **Why callest thou me good?** The reading adopted by the revisers is, "Why askest thou me concerning that which is good?" That is, the *good thing* he should do. But this does not fit so well the statement which follows. Mark and Luke retain the form, *Why callest thou me good?*

There is none good but one, that is, God. Do you, by calling me good, come to me as a divine teacher, or only as one of your Rabbis? Are you a sincere inquirer after the good?

The Object of the reply of Jesus was therefore (1) to lead the young man to truer ideas of what goodness and eternal life were, so that he might measure himself by the supreme standard, and see how far short he came; (2) to raise the youth's ideas of Jesus as the Son of God, as the source of truth and good, and thus to give authority in his mind to his teachings and to his command to sell all that he had.

Thus we see the First Step in the upward path, — a high ideal which convinces of sin, while it points to God and his Son Jesus. **If thou wilt**

[1] Ewing. [2] Bunyan. [3] Canon Tristram. [4] Tennyson's *Two Voices*.

18 He saith unto him, Which? And Jē'sus said, [e]Thou shalt [do no murder, not kill,] Thou shalt not commit adultery, Thou shalt not steal, Thou shalt not bear false witness,

19 Honour thy father and [thy] mother: and, [f]Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself.

20 The young man saith unto him, [g]All these things have I [kept from my youth up: observed:] what lack I yet?

e Rom. 13. 9. Cited from Ex. 20. 12–16 & Deut. 5. 16–20. Cp. ch. 5. 21, 27. *f* ch. 5. 43 & 22. 39. Mark 12. 31. Luke 10. 27. Gal. 5. 14. James 2. 8. Cited from Lev. 19. 18. *g* Cp. Phil. 3. 6.

(wishest to) **enter into life** (the true life, eternal life), **keep the commandments**. Preserve them unbroken by careful watching. The Greek verb rendered *keep* (τηρέω) carries with it the idea of watchfulness, of keeping as the result of guarding.

18. **He saith unto him, Which?** What kind? The ten commandments, the teachings of the Rabbis, or, Have you a special reference to some high and difficult commandments, some "counsels of perfection"? **Jesus said.** Referring to the commandments which the good God had given. He refers only to the second table of the law, relating to duties toward his fellow-men, and the sum of them.

19. **Love thy neighbour as thyself.** These were the commandments most easily brought to his consciousness, most easily seen and measured. They were a visible test which he could apply to himself in the presence of others.

Keeping the Commandments, and Eternal Life. Jesus put the commandments before him because (1) there is no complete eternal life without the keeping of the commandments, and no beginnings of eternal life without the spirit which seeks, longs, and endeavors to keep them. For (2) they are the expression of the true principles of holy living. Good people, saints, and angels in heaven live according to them. (3) A person may keep them in outward form and yet not have eternal life. (4) The commandments are the divine standard which shows us how much we have failed in the true life, and by which the Holy Spirit convinces us of sin and need. For (5) no one ever entered eternal life by merely trying to keep the commandments. (6) Jesus Christ has come to save us, by implanting that new life, that loving and obedient spirit, which will lead to the keeping of the commandments. Jesus saves not *in* sin, but *from* sin.

Here was the Second Step, — a conviction of sin and imperfection, by measuring one's self by the law in its divine strictness. The ideal was placed before him, and his life stood beside the ideal.

The Young Man imagines He has kept the Commandments. 20. **All these things have I kept.** Observed, guarded so that they have not been violated, and this he had done from his **youth up.** He had sincerely tried to live a good moral life. He had guided his actions by these laws in outward form, with good success. He did not recollect any failure, any special cases of disobedience. Yet he was not satisfied, and he asked, **What lack I yet?** Why am I not conscious that I possess eternal life? Why this aching void, this restless conscience, this unsatisfied hunger, this doubt and dread as I look into the future? The *Int. Crit. Com.*, on Luke, represents it not so much a boast as an expression of dissatisfaction, as if he had said, "I wanted to be told of something special and sublime, and I am merely reminded of duties I have been performing all my life."

1. The young man did not realize the wide reach of the law, its perfect holiness, and how many, many imperfections there were even in his keeping of it.

2. He did not realize how many things he had omitted to do, as expressed in Matt. 25 : 41–45. The "cursed," who departed "into everlasting fire prepared for the devil and his angels," asked the judge, in surprise, when they had failed in the things charged against them.

3. He did not realize the spiritual meaning of the law, that outward acts are not good unless filled with love to God and man.

Men are sometimes self-righteous because all they see in the law is an outward formal keeping of its precepts, which they can attain; as a child, seeing a star rising over the hills, may think it but a street lamp, which he can easily reach. But whosoever sees the spirit of the law, as the expression of God's holy character, will be convicted of sin, for he will see how high, and great, and radiant that law is; as to the astronomer the child's star is known to be infinitely above him, a measureless world of light.

What was still lacking. 21. **Jesus said unto him.** Looking at him with a fixed and earnest gaze. **And he loved him** (Mark). He was so noble, so earnest and sincere in his seeking, so lovable, that the soul of Jesus was drawn out toward him. And all the more because he was not satisfied with any outward keeping of the

21 Jē'sus said unto him, If thou wilt wouldest be *h* perfect, go, and *i* sell that thou hast, and give to the poor, and thou shalt have *j* treasure in heaven: and come, and follow me.

22 *k* But when the young man heard that the saying, he went away sorrowful: for he was one that had great possessions.

h See ch. 5. 48. *i* Luke 12. 33. Cp. Luke 16. 9 & 19. 8 & Acts 2. 45 & 4. 34, 35 & 1 Tim. 6. 18, 19. *j* ch. 6. 19, 20. *k* Cp. Ezek. 33. 31.

law. Jesus saw in him great possibilities of character and of service, a pillar in the temple of God, a power for good in the new kingdom.

He said to him because he loved him, "One thing thou lackest" (Mark). There was one thing more to complete his obedience and perfect his character. That one thing was love, and faith its Siamese twin, — faithful love and loving faith expressed in entire consecration of all he was and all he had to God. It was like the sun lacking light, or a fire lacking heat, or a man lacking a soul.

If thou wilt (wishest to) **be perfect.** Complete, wanting nothing. Jesus saw just what the young man lacked, and applied the remedy. **Sell that thou hast.** Not for himself, but to **give to the poor.** To use his wealth for God and humanity. Jesus here touched the centre of the young man's difficulty. He was willing to commit to God everything except his property. That he was not ready to trust to God's direction. But the withholding anything from God proves that we do not really trust him or love him, we do not belong to his kingdom. **And thou shalt have treasure in heaven.** You will have the character which belongs to heaven, and God will reward you abundantly there for all your self-denials for his sake. The treasure was thus the eternal life he sought. (See Matt. 6: 19-21.) **And come.** Come to Jesus, to his character and person, join the company of the apostles who were to carry on the kingdom of God in the world. He might be the business man of the apostles in the place of Judas, who had failed. He would thus be able to have a noble and glorious part in the redemption of the world, and thus have treasure unspeakable in heaven. **And follow me,** with the disciples, as a personal attendant. At the same time he was to follow his example, obey his precepts, devote himself to his cause.

THE UNDERLYING PRINCIPLE. Jesus applied this test to the young man because it was the one test of obedience and faith that he needed. It was the test that would reveal his soul to himself. "He meant to plant a seed in him which might spring up into eternal life, but which, alas! might die, and leave him consciously enslaved to the world." [1] "Was not this what Christ enjoined upon the young ruler, — a conscious, willing transfer of his great possessions from himself to God, in such a real way as that henceforth *his sense of ownership* in them should cease, and a *sense of stewardship* should take its place?" [2] The particular requirement of the young man was not "a counsel of perfection," but a test for his particular case, like that of Abraham's faith in the offering up of Isaac. But the principle involved is for all, as a condition of becoming a disciple of Jesus. The principle is that we are to give up everything to Christ — our property, our time, our all — *to use as he would have us*, to hold our property as God's stewards. We are to give so much as he directs to the poor; to leave all, and be missionaries, if he demands; to suffer the loss of all, if that is needful, in order that we may do right; to spend upon our families, our business, our pleasure, just as Christ would have us. The man who gives up all to be a minister or missionary and the man whose vocation is business are to be equally consecrated, are equally to follow Jesus. Jesus did not require Zaccheus to give up all his property, nor any others of his disciples. To make this the requirement of Christianity would be to destroy civilization and progress, and prevent the millennium.

"Is the normal man to be an idler, and the child of God a beggar?" "Wealth is a desirable good only so far as it is a means to a man's highest development, — that is, only so long as it renders him more capable of fulfilling Jesus' ideal of fraternity." "His denunciation is unsparing of those men who make wealth at the expense of souls; who find in capital no incentive to further fraternity." [3]

THE GREAT REFUSAL.[4] 22. **He went away sorrowful.** Luke says he became exceedingly sorrowful; Mark, that his countenance fell, the same word as that rendered "lowring" when the Saviour was talking about the sky (Matt. 16: 3). "The signs of a storm were on his face, the

[1] Pres. Woolsey. [2] S. J. Humphrey, D. D.

[3] Prof. Shailer Mathews, *The Social Teaching of Jesus.*

[4] "For centuries scholars have spoken of this interview as 'The Great Refusal.' Dante, wandering with Virgil through the Inferno, thought he saw the young ruler searching for his lost opportunity." — Newell Dwight Hillis, D. D. A most effective illustration is found in the tract, *Captain Ball's Experience;* also in Trench's *Poems*, "Mahmoud the Idol-Breaker."

23 ¶ Then said Je'sus / And Je'sus said unto his disciples, Verily I say unto you, / It is hard for That a rich man shall hardly / to enter into the kingdom of heaven.

24 [m] And again I say unto you, It is easier for a camel to go through the eye of a needle's / a needle, than for a rich man to enter into [n] the kingdom of God.

25 When his / And when the disciples heard [it], they were exceedingly amazed, / astonished exceedingly, saying, Who then can be saved?

l Cp. 1 Cor. 1. 26. See ch. 13. 22. *m* Cp. Mark 10. 24. *n* See ch. 12. 28.

gloom of a heavy wrath and disappointment was in his heart." **For he had great possessions.** He went away reluctantly, after a great struggle, but he went. He wanted eternal life, but he wanted his possessions more, and he could not have both. How little joy his stately houses and broad lands would give him after this! He could never again look upon them without seeing on them, in flaming letters, like those on the barrels in Deacon Giles' distillery, "This cost me eternal life."

Like the merchantman seeking goodly pearls (Matt. 13: 45, 46), he found the pearl of great price; but unlike him, he refused to sell all that he had to obtain it.

It is not certain that this young man did not repent and return as did Nicodemus. He may have gained the victory at last, and his sorrow "may have been the birth pangs of a spirit struggling for release. But the end of the struggle is not revealed."[1] His present failure was sad and dangerous, and may have ended in eternal loss. But if he had only obeyed Christ at this time, he would have received an hundredfold in return, as Jesus afterwards promised to Peter (vers. 28–30). The young ruler's name is unknown, his influence unfelt. In a few years his possessions were ravaged by the Roman legions, while the disciples introduced a new and blessed kingdom on earth, whose influence is widening all down the ages, and won a crown of glory never to fade.

JESUS TEACHES SOME LESSONS FROM THIS CASE, vers. 23–30.

23. **Then said Jesus unto his disciples.** After the young man had left: **A rich man shall hardly** (with difficulty) **enter into the kingdom of heaven.** Mark explains it of those "who trust in riches," to which trust the rich are specially tempted. It is difficult (1) because they feel that they have so much to give up to Christ. (2) Because of the tendency to trust in riches, and not to feel the need of a Saviour. (3) Because riches are apt to engender pride that will not stoop to the humble service of God. (4) Because rich men are apt to be allied in business and socially with many who are not Christians, and it requires great courage and faith to break away. (5) Because in many cases they will have to restore ill-gotten riches, to change their business or methods of business and sources of gain, which are not truly Christian. (6) Because it is especially difficult to invite them, to reach them with the gospel message.

24. **It is easier for a camel to go through the eye of a needle.** The camel being the largest animal with which the Jews were acquainted, its name became proverbial for denoting anything remarkably large; and "a camel's passing through a needle's eye came, by consequence, as appears from some rabbinical writings, to express a thing absolutely impossible."[2] "Just as soon will an elephant pass through the spout of a kettle."[3] "The eye of a needle is either the small door sometimes made in the city gates, called the needle's eye by the Arabs, — large enough for a man, but too small for a camel, — or, rather, the Oriental needle, of burnished iron, from two to five inches long, or their large ivory tape-needle."[4] It is now generally thought that the calling this small gate "the needle's eye" is a modern custom, not in use in the time of Christ. It is exceedingly difficult for a rich man, as such; but for one who *trusts* in riches, to enter the kingdom is impossible, from the very nature of the kingdom.[5]

> "I would ride the camel,
> Yes, leap him flying, through the needle's eye,
> As easily as such a pampered soul
> Could pass the narrow gate."[6]

25. **Who then can be saved?** For the great body of people wanted riches, whether they succeeded in obtaining them or not. If the most favored and prominent class could not enter the kingdom, who could? And the difficulty was all the greater because prosperity was one of the promised blessings of the Messiah's reign; and wealth was especially necessary for the

[1] Prof. H. B. Swete.
[2] George Campbell, *Oriental Proverbs.*
[3] Roberts. [4] Van Lennep.
[5] Compare the strait gate of Matt. 7: 13, 14; the description of "the wicket gate" in *Pilgrim's Progress;* the picture, in *Scripture Emblems*, of a man trying to go through the wicket gate with the world in his arms.
[6] Southey.

26 But And Jē′s̱us [o] beheld looking upon *them*, and said unto to them, [p] With men this is impossible; but with God all things are possible.

27 ¶ Then answered Pē′tẽr and said unto him, Behold, Lo, [q] we have forsaken left all, and followed thee; what then shall we have? therefore?

28 And Jē′s̱us said unto them, Verily I say unto you, That that ye which have followed me, in the regeneration [r] when the Son of man shall sit in on the throne of his glory, [s] ye also shall sit upon twelve thrones, [t] judging the twelve tribes of Ĭs̱′rą-el.

29 [u] And every one that hath forsaken left houses, or brethren, or sisters, or father, or mother, or wife, or children, or lands, for my name's sake, shall receive an a hundredfold, and shall [v] inherit everlasting eternal life.

30 But [w] many *that are* first shall be last; *that are* first; and [x] the last *shall be* first. first *that are* last.

o Mark 10. 21. Luke 22. 61. *p* Gen. 18. 14. Job 42. 2. Jer. 32. 17, 27. Zech. 8. 6. Mark 14. 36. Luke 1. 37. *q* ch. 4. 20, 22. Mark 1. 18, 20. *r* See ch. 16. 27. *s* Luke 22. 30. Rev. 3. 21. *t* Cp. 1 Cor. 6. 2. *u* Cp. Luke 14. 26. *v* Cp. ver. 16. See ch. 25. 34. *w* ch. 20. 16. Mark 10. 31. Luke 13. 30. *x* Cp. ch. 21. 31, 32.

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kingdom as they had pictured it to their own minds.

26. **With men this is impossible.** On worldly principles, by worldly motives, by the power of man, it cannot be done. **With God all things are possible.** He can remove these great difficulties. He can renew the heart. He can take away the love of riches. He can transform the hindrances into steps heavenward. He can put into a man's heart new motives, that will make him more diligent in business than the love of riches can, that will make him full of usefulness and helpfulness. His very riches can be made to help on God's kingdom.

27. **Then answered Peter, . . . Behold, we have forsaken all.** Possessions, boats, business, property, homes, means of subsistence, — all had been given up. Peter would ask how he and the other disciples stood in respect to the kingdom of God. Have we stood the test you applied to the young ruler?

28. **Verily I say unto you** (emphasizing what follows), **ye which have followed me**, at such cost, at last, **in the regeneration**, the new creation, when there shall be "a new heaven and a new earth."

> "The far-off Divine event
> To which the whole creation moves,"

when the Son of man shall sit in the throne of his glory, his kingdom having come.

Ye also shall sit upon twelve thrones. You shall have risen "from the cross to the crown." You are now poor, despised by the rulers, of seemingly small account in the world; but you have taken the right and only road to the throne. The throne is the symbol of power, of authority, of a place of great influence over others, of leadership. This promise has been actually fulfilled. These apostles have more influence to-day in the world than all the Jewish and Roman rulers together in their day. It was a promise of success, of the triumph of their cause.

Judging (κρίνοντες), not merely pronouncing judgment, putting to trial, or condemning; but taking the place of the Jewish authorities over **the twelve tribes of Israel**, the literal Jews, and also the new kingdom of God which they represent. They shall, by their work, and by their writings concerning Christ, be the ruling authority, binding and loosing, and making known the great principles of the kingdom of God.

29. **And every one that hath forsaken houses, or brethren . . . for my name's sake.** This removes all danger of selfishness. For if any had left their property for the sake of obtaining more, or for any selfish purpose, they would fail of the reward; they would not come within the conditions of the promise. **Shall receive an hundredfold.** Mark adds "now, in this time," and "with persecutions." Not literally an hundred houses or brothers or mothers in the place of those left, for that would be impossible; but an hundred times as much value from them, and blessing in them. What was a barren rock before becomes a gold mine. This is a general statement concerning the influence of the kingdom of God upon this present life. All earthly possessions and affections are transfigured by the self-denying spirit of the Gospel, as the fisherman's rough log hut in Goethe's *Tale of Tales* was transformed into an exquisitely wrought temple of silver.

And shall inherit everlasting life. The life which the young ruler thought he wanted, but refused to accept. Earthly property and friends pass away, but in the Gospel they are immortal, and death is not the losing, but the entrance into eternal possession.

30. **But many that are first shall be last,**

etc. You cannot tell by present appearances what the final result shall be. Many that are first in reputation shall be last. Many that are conspicuous shall be obscure. The sower of the seed may be of greater influence than he who reaps the harvest. Many a humble person shall be exalted, and the conceited and self-righteous shall find their true level. Do not, therefore, be troubled by present appearances, or seek the highest places.

CHAPTER 20.

SECTION XVIII.—THE PEREAN MINISTRY (*continued*).

5. PARABLE OF THE LABORERS IN THE VINEYARD, vers. 1–16.
6. CHRIST AGAIN FORETELLS HIS CRUCIFIXION AND RESURRECTION, vers. 17–19.
7. THE AMBITION OF JAMES AND JOHN, vers. 20–28.
8. TWO BLIND MEN RECEIVE SIGHT, AT JERICHO, vers. 29–34.

Time.

March, A. D. 30. A few days before the Crucifixion.

Place.

Perea and Jericho, on the way to Jerusalem.

1 FOR the kingdom of heaven is like unto a man (*that is* an householder), which went out early in the morning to hire labourers into his vineyard.

2 And when he had agreed with the labourers for a [y] penny a day, he sent them into his vineyard.

3 And he went out about the third hour, and saw others standing (idle) in the marketplace (idle),

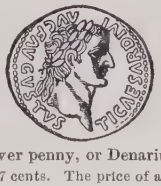
4 And (to them he) said (unto them), Go ye also into the vineyard, and whatsoever is right I will give you. And they went their way.

y Tobit 5. 14.

V. PARABLE OF THE LABORERS IN THE VINEYARD, vers. 1–16.

1. **For.** This parable is an illustration of the last verse of ch. 19, and ends with the same truth. **The kingdom of heaven,** see on 3 : 2; 19 : 14. **Is like unto a man that is an householder,** the owner of a farm or an estate. **Went out early in the morning,** "along with the dawn," **to hire labourers.** "Here (at Hamadan, in Persia) we observed every morning, before the sun rose, that a numerous band of peasants were collected, with spades in their hands, waiting to be hired for the day to work in the surrounding fields. This custom struck me as a most happy illustration of our Saviour's parable, particularly when, passing by the same place late in the day, we found others standing idle, and remembered his words, 'Why stand ye here all the day idle?' as most applicable to their situation; for on putting the very same question to them, they answered us, 'Because no man hath hired us.'" [1]

2. **For a penny a day.** The penny was the Roman silver denarius, worth 16 or 17 cents of our money, but of four to six times the purchasing power. The denarius was the basis of the



Silver penny, or Denarius.
Worth 16 or 17 cents. The price of a day's labor.

common transactions of the day, as the dollar is with us, the franc in France, the mark in Germany, or the lira in Italy. It was a good price for a day's work, and more than the daily pay of a Roman soldier.

3–6. **The third hour, . . . others standing**

[1] Morier, *Second Journey through Persia*, cited by Trench, *Parables.*

5 Again he went out about the sixth and the ninth hour, and did likewise.
6 And [z] about the eleventh hour he went out, and found others standing; idle,
and he saith unto them, Why stand ye here all the day idle?
7 They say unto him, Because no man hath hired us. He saith unto them,
Go ye also into the vineyard; and whatsoever is right, *that* shall ye receive.
8 So And [a] when even was come, the lord of the vineyard saith unto his [b] steward,
Call the labourers, and give pay them their hire, beginning from the last unto the
first.
9 And when they came that *were hired* about the eleventh hour, they received
every man a penny.
10 But And when the first came, they supposed that they should have received would receive more; and
they likewise received every man a penny.
11 And when they had received it, they murmured against the goodman of the house,
householder,
12 Saying, saying, These last have wrought spent *but* one hour, and thou hast made them equal
unto us, which have borne the burden of the day [c] and heat of the day.
the scorching heat.
13 But he answered one of them, and said to one of them, [d] Friend, I do thee no wrong:
didst not thou agree with me for a penny?
14 Take up [e] that thine *is*, that which is thine, and go thy way; I it is my will to give unto this last, even
as unto thee.
15 [f] Is it not lawful for me to do what I will with mine own? [g] Is or is thine eye
evil, because I am good?
16 So [h] the last shall be first, and the first last: for many be called, but few chosen.

z Cp. 1 Cor. 15. 8. *a* Lev. 19. 13. Deut. 24. 15. Tobit 4. 14. *b* Luke 8. 3. Cp. ch. 24. 45. *c* Luke 12. 55. James 1. 11 (Gk.). Cp. Gen. 31. 40 & Jonah 4. 8 (Gk.), *al.* *d* ch. 22. 12 & 26. 50. *e* ch. 25. 25. *f* Cp. Rom. 9. 15-24. *g* ch. 6. 23. Deut. 15. 9. Prov. 23. 6. Ecclus. 14. 10. Mark 7. 22, *al.* *h* See ch. 19. 30.

idle, . . . sixth . . . ninth . . . eleventh hour. Several times the householder went after laborers, for there was more work to be done than the first ones called could do.

8. **Call the labourers, and give them their hire.** They received each one a penny, whether they had worked one hour or twelve.

10-12. **The first . . . supposed that they should have received,** since they had borne **the burden and heat of the day,** the scorching heat. Having done more they felt that they ought to have larger pay; and they complained to the steward of their unfair treatment.

13-15. **Friend, I do thee no wrong.** I have done for you exactly what I agreed, and if I am so good as to help those who wanted to work but found none till the ninth or eleventh hour, why should you complain? It has been well said: "Further, time is not the only element in service. An act of swift intelligence or of bravery wrought in the space of a single minute has saved an army or a people, and merited higher reward than a lifetime of ordinary service."[1]

The Greek word rendered **friend** does not refer to the idea of affectionate, intimate friendship, but rather to a neighbor or acquaintance.

16. **So the last shall be first,** as in 19:30. "The parable teaches a change of place between the first and the last, yet not a change that shall be universal." They shall not be last because they were first hired, but "first in magnitude and extent of their work, they shall be last because of the spirit in which it was performed."[2] Those who were first in time, in opportunity, in education, in length of preparation, may, some of them, be last in usefulness and success. **For many be called, but few chosen.** "The easiest interpretation seems to be, Many are called to work in God's vineyard, but few retain that temper of spirit, that humility, that entire submission to the righteousness of God, that utter denial of any claim as of right on their own part, which will allow them in the end to be partakers of his reward."[3]

The Interpretation. 1. God is represented by the householder.

2. The world is the vineyard.

3. All disciples of Christ, all laborers in God's kingdom, are the laborers.

[1] *Cambridge Bible.* [2] Wm. M. Taylor, D. D. [3] Arbp. Trench.

17 ¶ [i] And as Jē′sus was going up to Jĕ-ru′să-lĕm, he took the twelve disciples apart, and in the way and he said unto them,

18 Behold, [j] we go up to Jĕ-ru′să-lĕm; and the Son of man shall be betrayed delivered unto the chief priests and unto the scribes; and they shall [k] condemn him to death,

19 And and shall [l] deliver him to unto the Gĕn′tīles [m] to mock, and to scourge, and [n] to crucify: him: and [o] the third day he shall rise again. be raised up.

20 ¶ [p] Then came to him the [q] mother of Zeb′e-dee's children the sons of Zeb′e-dee with her sons, [r] worshipping *him*, and desiring asking a certain thing of him.

21 And he said unto her, What wilt wouldest thou? She saith unto him, Grant Command that these my two sons [s] may sit, the one on thy right hand, and the other one on thy left hand, [t] in thy kingdom.

i For vers. 17–19, see Mark 10. 32–34 & Luke 18. 31–33. Cp. ch. 16. 21–28 & 17. 12, 22, 23. *j* See ch. 16. 21. *k* ch. 26. 66. John 19. 7. *l* ch. 27. 2. John 18. 30, 31. Acts 3. 13. Cp. Acts 2. 23 & 4. 27 & 21. 11. *m* ch. 27. 26–31. *n* ch. 26. 2. Luke 24. 7. John 12. 32, 33 & 18. 32. *o* ch. 16. 21 & 27. 63. *p* For vers. 20–28, see Mark 10. 35–45. *q* ch. 4. 21 & 27. 56. *r* See ch. 8. 2. *s* Cp. ch. 19. 28. *t* ch. 16. 28 & 25. 31, 34. Luke 23. 42.

4. The idlers are those who look on, but take no part in bringing in the kingdom. "The greatest man of business in worldly things is a mere idle gazer, if he has not yet entered on the true work which alone is worth anything, or gains any reward."[1] "The last go home, each with a penny in his pocket and astonished glad gratitude in his heart; their reward accordingly is a penny and *more*. The first, on the contrary, go home each with a penny in his pocket, and corroding discontent in his soul; their reward accordingly is *less* than a penny."[2]

5. The twelfth hour is the completion of the kingdom.

6. The applications are many. As to the disciples, it showed that they must not trust to their being first called, or to their prominence or privileges, as if these would certainly make them the most useful of all. Stephen and Paul and Mark were called later, but became among the first. So it is all through the history of Christianity. It was also true of the wider kingdom of God. The Jewish nation were first in time and in privilege, but many became last; and many of the Gentiles, who came last, became first in usefulness, in power for good, in the development of the kingdom of God.

VI. CHRIST AGAIN FORETELLS HIS CRUCIFIXION AND RESURRECTION, vers. 17–19.

This is the third time Jesus made this announcement to his disciples in Matthew's account. And it is twice reported by Luke. The announcement made a deep impression, and was needed by the disciples to sustain their faith under the trying hours that were soon to come. The very Crucifixion was a proof of the prophetic foresight of Jesus. (See on 16 : 21 ; 17 : 22, 23.)

VII. THE AMBITION OF JAMES AND JOHN, vers. 20–28.

PARALLEL. Mark 10 : 35–45.

20. **The mother of Zebedee's children.** Not little children, but sons. From comparing 27: 55, 56 with Mark 15 : 40 ; 16 : 1, it appears that her name was Salome. The sons were James and John (Mark 10 : 35). According to Mark, the sons came making the request for themselves. This agrees with Matthew, for she came with her sons. The sons asked through their mother, or both she and they asked by their coming together to Jesus, no matter which one of them voiced the request. Probably the two brethren had directed this request *through their mother*, because they remembered the rebuke which had followed their former contention about precedence (18 : 1–3 ; Mark 9 : 33–37).[3] **Worshipping him.** That is, *doing obeisance*, prostrating herself, with her sons, as was usual in asking a favor of a king. **Desiring a certain thing of him.** She asked a favor, but did not at once tell what it was, probably because doubtful of the propriety of the request.

21. **What wilt thou?** It was best for them to spread out in the clear light their secret thoughts and hopes. Such a statement is often more than half a cure. **Grant that these my two sons may sit, the one on thy right hand, and the other on the left, in thy kingdom.** That is, in the two chief places of honor. The first place of honor was the right hand of the sovereign ; the second, the left hand.[4] They doubtless still expected an outward kingdom of worldly splendor. Not long before this Jesus had told

[1] Stier. [2] Arnot, on the *Parables*. [3] Alford. [4] See Josephus, *Ant.*, vi. 11. 9.

22 But Jē'sus answered and said, "Ye know not what ye ask. Are ye able
v to drink [of] the cup that I [shall] am about to drink? of, and to be baptized with the baptism that I am baptized with? They say unto him, We are able.

23 [And he] He saith unto them, Ye shall drink indeed of my cup, and be baptized with the baptism that I am *w* My cup indeed *x* ye shall drink:
but to sit on my right hand, and on [my] *my* left hand, is not mine to give,
y but *it* [*shall be given to*] *is for* *them* for whom it [is] hath been *z* prepared of my Father.

u Cp. Luke 9. 33 & 23. 34. *v* ch. 26. 29, 42. Mark 14. 36. Luke 22. 42. John 18. 11. Cp. Isai. 51. 22. *w* Cp. Rom. 8. 17 & Phil. 3. 10. *x* Acts 12. 2. Rev. 1. 9. *y* Cp. ch. 19. 11. *z* ch. 25. 34.

the disciples that they should sit on twelve thrones, judging the twelve tribes of Israel, while he sat on his own throne of glory (Matt. 19: 28), and they felt sure that the time must now be close at hand. They must secure their places soon, or some one else would be before them.[1]

Motives for their Request. These two disciples were good men, but still imperfect, and their motives were of mingled good and evil. Close beside each wrong motive was a better one, which largely concealed from their eyes the partial selfishness of their aims. (1) One motive was selfish ambition. They wanted great things for themselves. (2) But without doubt there lay close to this the hope of greater usefulness, and wider influence. (3) They had some reason for thinking that Jesus regarded them as especially fitted for these places. They had been named Sons of Thunder (Mark 3: 17). They had been chosen with Peter more than once to accompany Jesus where the others were left out. (4) There were better motives intermingled. What they desired would keep them very near the Master they loved. It would give them a more intimate acquaintance with Jesus, and higher knowledge of his truths. It would give them more employment in the kingdom they hoped was coming. It showed faith in Jesus and his promises. It showed courage; that they would go with Jesus to the cross in order to wear the crown with him.

22. **Ye know not what ye ask.** They knew not the greatness of the favor they asked, — how blessed beyond their highest dreams it was to sit on the right hand of the Son of God, how radiant the glories of that kingdom were to be. They knew not how hard the way, nor how difficult the conditions on which alone they could have their desire. They knew not what they were specially fitted for. No one knows enough to wisely choose his own lot. There are hidden cares and burdens and trials in the riches and honors we seek, — "the loudest laugh of hell, the pride of dying rich;" there are glories and joys and powers in the future as yet concealed from us. They only are wise who desire that God's wisdom and love should choose their lot for them.

"I know not the way I am going,
But well do I know my guide."

There are few things we need to be more thankful for than that some of our prayers are not answered in the way we desired.[2]

Are ye able to drink of the cup that I shall drink of? Have you counted the cost? Can you pay the price? The *cup* is an Old Testament image of a man's lot or portion, as holding whatever God puts into his life. **Be baptized with the baptism that I am baptized with.** Baptism was the ordinance, the necessary condition, by which one could enjoy the privileges of the visible church. Could these disciples endure the conditions — the agony, the humiliation, the cross — through which alone Christ could enter his glory, and become the king of the world? "Are ye able and fit to be dipped or drenched in those deep waters of affliction, pains, and miseries, in which I must shortly be drenched?"[3] "The distinction between the two figures seems to be twofold: (1) the *cup* signifies inward, the *baptism* outward suffering, drinking and baptizing being respectively an inward and outward application of water; (2) the *cup* signifies suffering voluntarily taken, or 'drunk,' and the baptism what is endured at the hands of others."[4] **They say unto him, We are able.** The language of assurance somewhat overweening, for it was the assurance not wholly of faith, but partly of ignorance of themselves and of the future. They fled with the other disciples, in the night of the arrest. But they were not wholly mistaken in their judgment of themselves. They were among the very bravest of the apostles, and many a time did they drink of Jesus' cup, as Jesus said they would in ver. 23, **ye shall drink indeed,** etc. James was the first of the apostles to suffer martyrdom (Acts 12: 1, 2), and John had a long life of labors and persecutions. These trials and tests they might be sure of.

But to sit on my right hand, etc. Omit, in

[1] "That venomous worm of goodness, vainglory." — *Leighton.* "Adam and Eve were happy in the garden of Eden until they desired to be as gods." — *Tyng.* "Pride is the inmost coat, which we put off last, and which we put on first." — *Bishop Hall.*

[2] On trying to manage Providence for ourselves, see Rev. Dr. E. E. Hale's capital story of "Hands Off" in his *Christmas in a Palace.*

[3] Petter.

[4] Eugene Stock.

24 And when the ten heard *it*, they were moved with indignation (against / concerning) the two brethren.

25 But Jĕ'sus called them (*unto him*, / unto him,) and said, [a] Ye know that the (princes / rulers) of the Gĕn'tīles [b] (exercise dominion / lord it) over them, and (they that are great / their great ones) exercise authority (upon / over) them.

26 [c] (But it shall not be so / Not so shall it be) among you: but whosoever (will be / would become) great among you' (let him / shall) be your [d] minister;

a For vers. 25–28, cp. ch. 18. 1–4 & Luke 22. 25–27. *b* 1 Pet. 5. 3. *c* ch. 23. 11. Cp. Luke 9. 48. *d* ch. 22. 13 (mg.).

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the rest of this verse, the added words printed in italics, and the sense is plain. **Is not mine to give, but,** except (*to those*), **for whom it is prepared of my Father.** "Our Lord means that such dignities as his disciples desired would not, and could not, be conferred in a capricious way by a mere act of the sovereign's pleasure. There could be no scope, in such high matters, for personal favoritism. It was in vain, therefore, for any to attempt to steal a march on their fellow-servants. What they asked has been divinely prepared for those who are most worthy, those who have done most, and in heart and will sacrificed most, and suffered most. In the kingdom of heaven there is no chance of the highest posts and dignities being conferred on incompetent or inferior servants. The highest in excellence will be the highest in honor. It is for such, whether they be apostles, or ordinary preachers, or humble Sabbath-school teachers, whether they be crowned monarchs, or the lowliest of menials, that the highest places have been prepared by the Father in his all-embracing purpose and plan."[1]

Prepared of my Father. The greatest and best things done for God's kingdom have not been done by those whom men would have selected beforehand, but those in some way selected by the Father himself, because he knew they could be best trained and fitted for the work. This is the ideal we are seeking after in our city and national governments, as well as in the church.

Our Lord, it will be observed, does not *deny* the petition of James and John, or say they shall *not* occupy the place in his kingdom which they now improperly sought. For aught we know, *that may be their true place.* All we are sure of is, that seeking it did not obtain it, but would rather hinder than help, because it revealed a spirit exactly opposite to that which must prevail in the places sought.[2]

24. **And when the ten heard it, they were moved with indignation.** This shows that they had the same feelings as the two brothers. There was ground for indignation, if it were perfectly unselfish. But apparently they were guilty of the very common act of showing in our complaints of others the very faults in ourselves which we condemn in them. The selfish think others are selfish; the fretful think others are in bad temper. They were all in one boat. They all alike needed the instruction which Jesus proceeds to give.

25. **But Jesus called them unto him.** Their controversy in the last verse had been carried on aside and apart from Jesus. **Ye know that the princes of the Gentiles,** *i. e.*, this is the plan in the worldly kingdoms, in distinction from his spiritual kingdom. **Exercise dominion over them.** Lord it over them, exercise tyrannical and arbitrary power. Not for the good of the governed, but for the advantage of the rulers themselves, as the French king said, voicing the old idea of kingship, "I am the state." **They that are great.** Even the subordinate officials, governors and magistrates, exercise the same authority, seeking to get all they can from the people, and not to do them all the good they can. They are considered great in proportion to the numbers who serve them.

26. **But it shall not be so among you.** The whole principle of Christ's kingdom is the exact opposite of the usual worldly plan. Nearly all the evils that have come to the church have come through a disregard of this command, — a desire to be honored and to rule, rather than to serve and help. This is almost equally true of civil governments. To have all the rays of joy centre in us as a focus, — that is fire, the heart of sin; to be the centre from which rays emanate to all, — that is the sun, the heart of heaven. **But whosoever will be great among you.** Jesus does not forbid the desire to be great, but only the desire for selfish greatness. The wish to be greater than others is always a wrong ambition. The wish to be as great, as good, as useful as possible, to grow and improve, is right, but has its dangers. But the desire to serve others can never be too strong. **Let him be your minister** (διάκονος), our word *deacon* is almost a transcript of the Greek.

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[1] Morison.

[2] "Fling away ambition: by that sin fell the angels. How can man, then, the image of his Maker, hope to win by it?" — *Shakespeare.*

27 And and whosoever will would be chief first among you, let him shall be your [e]servant:
28 Even even as the Son of man came not to be ministered unto, but [f]to minister, and [g]to give his life a ransom [h]for many.
29 [i]And as they departed went out from Jĕr'ĭ-chō, a great multitude followed him.

e 2 Cor. 4. 5 (& mg. for mg.). *f* John 13. 4, 13–15. Phil. 2. 7. Cp. 2 Cor. 8. 9. *g* Isai. 53. 10. Dan. 9. 26. John 10. 15 & 11. 51, 52. Rom. 4. 25. Gal. 1. 4 & 2. 20. 1 Tim. 2. 6. Tit. 2. 14. 1 Pet. 1. 18, 19. *h* ch. 26. 28. Isai. 53. 11, 12. Heb. 2. 10 & 9. 28. Cp. Rom. 5. 15 & Rev. 5. 9. *i* For vers. 29–34, see Mark 10. 46–52 & Luke 18. 35–43. Cp. ch. 9. 27–31.

It means *one who executes the commands of another*. It represents the servant in his activity for his work; an attendant, one who is serving another.[1]

27. **Be chief . . . let him be your servant,** (δοῦλος, from δεω, *to bind*), a bondman, one who gives himself wholly up to another's will; any servant or attendant. It denotes the permanent *relation* of servitude.

He is the greatest who does the greatest service to his fellow-men. In all he does he is seeking not to exalt himself, not to receive honor, not to be thought greatest, but to do the most good, to be the most helpful, to confer the largest benefits. This is true of the Church as a whole, as well as of each individual in it. It has power and true success, only so far as it seeks to help all people, and does not seek authority or honor for itself. The Church that arrogates authority, that seeks only its own culture, that labors to attract the rich and the honored that it may be financially strong, is on the highway to its own destruction. That church will have the most success which does the most to convert and elevate the people. Ruskin's last words, in his *Modern Painters*, are a noble commentary on these verses; "So far as you desire to possess rather than to give; so far as you look for power to command instead of to bless; . . . so long as the hope before you is for supremacy instead of love; and your desire is to be greatest instead of least, — first instead of last, — so long you are serving the Lord of all that is last, and least; the last enemy that shall be destroyed — Death; and you shall have Death's crown, with the worm coiled within it; and death's wages, with the worm feeding on them."

28. Jesus now cites his own example, the example of him who is the greatest that ever lived on earth. **The Son of man,** the representative of the human race, the Messiah King, **came from heaven, not to be ministered unto,** not to gain honor or glory, or to have the world devote itself to his interests, **but to minister,** to help, to teach, to cure of disease, to save from sin. His whole life was given to the service of others. He asks of us only what he did himself. He shows us by example the only road to true greatness. It is the common suffrage of the race that no one can be truly great without this disinterested love, and that, however great a man may seem, selfishness always diminishes or removes his crown and his throne. **Give his life a ransom.** A *ransom* is a *price of deliverance*. He looked upon men as captives, and he by his life paid the price for their salvation. This was the highest possible example of serving others. He served them even to dying for them. **For many,** for the many, the whole human race. The whole life of Christ, — his original glory, his coming to earth, his birth, his childhood, his mission of teaching, his marvellous works, his death on the cross, — all this sets before us a perfect example of greatness by serving others. The central figure of the world, the greatest man, the king of kings, achieved his headship by serving men more widely, more self-sacrificingly, than any other being in the universe.

VIII. BARTIMEUS AND ANOTHER BLIND MAN RECEIVE SIGHT, vers. 29–34.

Time. The last of March, A. D. 30, just before the Passover.

Place. Jericho.

Parallels. Mark 10: 46–52; Luke 18: 35–43.

Other Miracles for the Blind. Two blind men at Capernaum (Matt. 9: 27–31); a man born blind (John 9: 1, etc.); one blind man at Bethsaida (Mark 8: 22–26); one at Capernaum (Matt. 12: 22, 23). (See, also, Matt. 11: 5.)

29. Jesus was journeying towards Jerusalem from Perea, and Jericho was on his way. **Jericho** was situated about fifteen or twenty miles northeast of Jerusalem, five miles west of the Jordan, and six or seven north of the Dead Sea. In the days of our Lord, Jericho was an important city, having been embellished by Herod the Great, and being a considerable centre of traffic.

And as they departed. Luke says "as he came nigh unto Jericho." That is, simply, "while he was in the vicinity of Jericho." As to the seeming discrepancy, it is said that fourteen methods of reconciling the two accounts have

[1] Thayer, *New Test. Lex.*

30 ¶ And behold, two blind men sitting by the way side, when they heard that Jē′sus (was passing) by, cried out, saying, (Lord, have) mercy on us, (O Lord, thou) *j* son of Dā′vid.

31 And the multitude *k* rebuked them, (because that) they should hold their peace: but they cried out the more, saying, (Lord, have) mercy on us, (O Lord, thou) son of Dā′vid.

32 And Jē′sus stood still, and called them, and said, What will ye that I (shall should) do unto you?

j ch. 21. 9 & 22. 42. See ch. 1. 1. *k* ch. 19. 13.

been suggested. There is not the least need of seeing a contradiction, for no one can know enough about the circumstances to be at all sure that there is one. There are simply two stories told by different persons from different standpoints, and both entirely truthful from those standpoints. Indeed, these differences are confirmations of the reliability of the historians. It shows that there was no collusion, no mere copying of the story from one another. It is useless indeed to try to harmonize what cannot be harmonized, but it is still more useless to refuse to see how two accounts by reliable historians can be both true. For instance, there was a real battle of Waterloo, and two armies witnessed it, although there is no agreement as to the exact time when it began. "At ten o'clock, said the Duke of Wellington. At half past eleven, said General Alava, who rode beside him. At twelve, according to Napoleon and Drouet; and at one, according to Ney." It would be non-critical to refuse to see that the great armies were widely extended, that the battle may have begun at different times in different places, and that different movements might be regarded as the beginning of the battle; as, when the order was given, when the armies began to approach one another, when they actually met. It is simply common sense to treat historians thus, and the same fair judgment should be used in reference to the writers of the Gospels. There may have been two Jerichos, as Dr. Broadus suggests, and this cure may have been between the old and the new cities, as Jesus went out of one and into the other. Or Jesus may have met them as they entered, and stopped to cure them as he departed. **A great multitude followed him**, from those who were going up from all over the country to Jerusalem to keep the Passover.

30. **Two blind men sitting by the way side.** Mark and Luke speak of but one, the most prominent, the one best known. A similar case occurs in the account of the demoniac of Gadara. The mentioning of one does not preclude the presence of another. "A familiar example will illustrate the principle. In the year 1824, Lafayette visited the United States, and was everywhere welcomed with honors and pageants. Historians will describe these as a noble incident in his life. Other writers will relate the same visit as made, and the same honors as enjoyed, by two persons, viz., Lafayette and his son. Will there be any contradiction between these two classes of writers? Will not both record the truth?"[1] "A well-known commentator in mentioning this difficulty refers to fourteen or fifteen proposed ways of harmonizing the discrepancies. What nonsense! why, whenever you enter any city or any village in the East you are likely to find one blind man on one side of the way, and two blind men on the other side of the way, and all three of them are sure to call on you for help."[2]

When they heard that, "that" in the Greek construction is "equivalent to quotation marks." They heard the crowd saying, "Jesus of Nazareth is passing by!" **Have mercy on us.** They had heard of Jesus before, and of his wonderful power to cure, and readiness to help. **Thou son of David.** That is, the Messiah who was to come, and one of his works was to be the opening of the eyes of the blind (see Isai. 29: 18; 42: 7).

31. **The multitude rebuked them**, found fault with them, told them to stop their cries, and get out of the way of the great teacher. Why should blind beggars interfere with the progress of the Messiah, and his teaching? They probably so misunderstood the mission of Jesus as to imagine that they were conferring a favor on him by warding off interference. **But they cried the more.** It was the one opportunity of their lives; it was now or never with them; it was sight now or lifelong darkness; it was a case almost of life or death. Therefore they must push on in spite of every obstacle and all opposers. The very opposition increased their efforts.

32. **And Jesus stood still.** Whatever others might do, Jesus never refused to listen to a call for help. The movement of the procession must also stop. **And called them**, by sending word

[1] Robinson's *Harmony of the Gospels.*

[2] H. C. Trumbull, *Studies in Oriental Social Life.*

33 They say unto him, Lord, that our eyes may be opened.
34 So And Jē'sus, had being moved with compassion, on them, and touched their eyes: and immediately their eyes straightway they received their sight, and they followed him.

through the bystanders (Mark). He sets those to calling the man who had just been hindering him. He gives them an opportunity to undo the evil they have done. "Christ could have called him directly, but he always gives men as much work in saving and blessing others as he can. He wishes men to be helpers of each other's joy." **What will ye that I shall do unto you?** He knew what they wanted, but it was best for the men to voice their desire. It would give them a clearer faith, and bring them into closer relations with their helper, and thus increase the spiritual benefit of their cure.

33. **Lord, that our eyes may be opened.** It is hard to find a greater physical blessing to the blind than to be enabled to see. It creates new worlds for them; it opens up new avenues of instruction, usefulness, and delight; it furnishes them with opportunities of earning their own living. It is equally blessed to have the spiritual eyes opened to the great realities of the kingdom of heaven, to divine truths, to true holiness, to pure motives, to eternal life.[1]

34. **So Jesus . . . touched their eyes.** As a means of communicating the power, and causing them to realize whence the healing came, and manifesting his kindly sympathy and love. This was accompanied by — "Go thy way; thy faith hath made thee whole" (Mark). **And immediately their eyes received sight,** through faith, shown by their seeking Jesus, their prayer, and their perseverance; and proved by their following him.[2] "The cure of a man depended upon no uncertain or arbitrary movement of the feelings of Jesus. He was always ready to heal. No one was ever refused who asked him. It rested with the man: the healing could not have its way and enter in, save the man would open his door. Hence the question, and the praise of the patient's faith."[3] **And they followed him,** joining the throngs who were accompanying Jesus to Jerusalem, and glorifying God for his goodness; with all the people, who when they saw it gave praise to God.

For various practical suggestions in connection with the cure of blindness, see on 9: 27–31.

[1] "In the Arabian Nights' tales there is a story of a remarkable ointment which, if rubbed on the eye, makes one see all the riches in the world; the gold hidden in the mines, the diamonds treasured in secret places. Macaulay, the great English writer, said that education is like that ointment, opening the eyes to see so much more." — *President Seth Low.*

[2] See Longfellow's *Poems*, "Blind Bartimeus;" Wordsworth's poem on "Milton's Blindness;" Miss Elizabeth Lloyd's poem on the same.

[3] George Macdonald.

Section XIX. — THE LAST DAYS OF THE PUBLIC MINISTRY OF JESUS. CHAPTERS 21–23.

THE LAST WEEK OF JESUS' LIFE.

The importance of this brief period is shown by the large space this week occupies in the Gospel records, almost exactly one third of the entire history. The last chapters average considerably longer than the earlier ones. The records of this week occupy in

Matthew, 7 chs. of the 28; or 369 of his 1071 verses, — one third of his Gospel.
Mark, 5 chs. of the 16; or 233 of his 678 verses, — one third of his Gospel.
Luke, 5 chs. of the 24, or 260 of his 1051 verses, — one fourth of his Gospel.
John, 8 chs. of the 21, or 287 of his 879 verses, — one third of his Gospel.

So that 25 of the 89 chs. in the Gospels, or 1149 of the 3679 verses in the four Gospels, that is, one third of the whole, are devoted to the events of this week.

CHAPTER 21.

RECORDING THE EVENTS OF SUNDAY, MONDAY, AND PARTS OF TUESDAY.

SECTION XIX.—THE LAST DAYS OF JESUS' PUBLIC LIFE.

FRIDAY, March 31. THE ARRIVAL AT BETHANY FROM JERICHO, John 12 : 1.
SATURDAY, April 1. THE SUPPER AT BETHANY, AND ANOINTING BY MARY, Matt. 26 : 6–13.
SUNDAY, April 2. 1. THE TRIUMPHAL ENTRY, vers. 1–11.
2. RETURN TO BETHANY.
MONDAY, April 3. 1. CURSING THE BARREN FIG-TREE, ON THE WAY TO THE CITY, vers. 18, 19.
2. THE SECOND CLEANSING OF THE TEMPLE, vers. 12, 13.
3. HEALING THE SICK, ver. 14.
4. EDUCATING THE PEOPLE IN RELIGION.
5. THE CHILDREN'S HOSANNAS, vers. 15–17.
TUESDAY, April 4. THE LAST DAY OF THE PUBLIC TEACHING OF JESUS, vers. 20–46.
1. LESSON FROM THE BARREN FIG-TREE, ON THE WAY TO THE CITY, vers. 20–22.
2. THE AUTHORITY OF JESUS QUESTIONED, vers. 23–27.
3. PARABLE OF THE TWO SONS, vers. 28–32.
4. PARABLE OF THE VINEYARD, vers. 33–41.
5. THE REJECTED STONE, vers. 42–46.

1 AND [l] when they drew nigh unto Jĕ-rŭ'să-lĕm, and (were come to / came unto) Bĕth'phą-ġē, unto [m] the mount of Ŏl'ives, then [n] (sent Je'sus / Je'sus sent) two disciples,
2 (Saying / saying) unto them, Go into the village (that is) over against you, and straightway ye shall find an ass tied, and a colt with her: loose *them*, and bring *them* unto me.

l For vers. 1–9, see Mark 11. 1–10 & Luke 19. 29–38 & John 12. 12–15. *m* ch. 24. 3 & 26. 30. Zech. 14. 4. [John 8. 1.] Cp. Acts 1. 12. *n* Cp. Mark 14. 13.

Sunday, April 2.

THE TRIUMPHAL ENTRY, vers. 1–11.

PALM SUNDAY.

PLACE. Bethany, the slopes of Olivet, Jerusalem, the Temple.

PARALLELS. Mark 11 : 1–11 ; Luke 19 : 29–44 ; John 12 : 12–19.

For three days now Jesus made his final endeavors to persuade the Jewish nation to accept him as their Messiah, and thus save themselves from destruction, and become a great power for bringing in the kingdom of heaven among men.

He used every possible means, in a great variety of ways, for accomplishing this purpose. He presented himself to them as a king. He showed his royal authority by cleansing the Temple, his Father's house. He performed royal deeds of power and of mercy in healing the sick. He argued, he discoursed, he pleaded, he taught, he answered objections, he threatened, he warned.

1. **And when they drew nigh unto Jerusalem.** This phrase includes the journey from Jericho to Bethany (John 12 : 1), where he arrived Friday evening; the supper on Saturday evening at the close of their Sabbath; and the leaving Bethany on their way to Jerusalem Sunday morning, the day after their Sabbath. **And were come to Bethphage** (*house of figs*, or *fig-town*), a village not far from Bethany (*house of dates*), toward Jerusalem on the northern road over **the mount of Olives**, "a hill just east of Jerusalem, so called from the olive-trees upon it. It was about a mile from the city. It was their open ground — for pleasure, for worship; the 'Park' of Jerusalem; the thoroughfare of any going or coming in the direction of the great Jordan valley." [1]

1, 2. **Then sent Jesus two disciples, Saying, . . . Go into the village** (Bethphage) **over against you**, and probably then in sight. "Coming from Bethany by the Jericho road (toward Jerusalem), in about a quarter of an hour we come to a gorge, across which — down steep, across, and steep up again — there is, and always must have been, a footpath for those who wish to make a short cut. But the main road curves around the end of the gorge, making a circuit, or *way round*, meeting the short cut just mentioned, very near the traditional site of Bethphage, where ruins have recently been found. The two disciples would cross the gorge by the foot-

[1] Dean Stanley.

3 And if any *man* / one say *ought* / aught unto you, ye shall say, The Lord hath need of them; and straightway he will send them.

4 All this was done, / Now this is come to pass, *o* that it might be fulfilled which was spoken by the prophet, saying,

5 *p* Tell ye the daughter of Sion, / Zion, Behold, thy King cometh unto thee, *q* meek, / Meek, and sitting / riding upon an ass, and / And upon a colt the foal of an ass.

o See ch. 1. 22. *p* Cited from Zech. 9. 9. Cp. Isai. 62. 11. *q* ch. 11. 29.

path, while the main company kept the regular road."[1] **Ye shall find an ass tied**, by a door without, *i. e.*, in the open street, in a place where two ways meet, which means, according to Professor Hall, the "way round" (Mark 11: 4). **And a colt with her.** The other Evangelists mention the colt only, as being the one on which the Lord rode, the mother probably accompanying it.[2] Mark and Luke add "whereon never man sat," in accordance with the rule "that animals used for sacred purposes must never have borne the yoke," or more probably as showing that Jesus "was not filling a place which others had filled before him."

3. **If any man say ought unto you**, make any objection, or ask you why you loose the ass and colt. Thus, according to Mark, "certain of those that stood there," and according to Luke, "the owners thereof," did question them when they were loosing the colt. **Ye shall say, The Lord hath need of them.** Probably the owner was a disciple or friend of Jesus, and glad to have him use anything he had, or if not a disciple, yet Jesus and his disciples had passed along this road so many times that doubtless the owner knew them well and could trust them, so that **straightway he will send them.**

4. **All this was done, that it might be fulfilled.** Jesus did this, not for the purpose of fulfilling the prophecy, but for the same reason that the prophecy was uttered, because it was the right and wise thing for the Messiah to do; and the result was that he fulfilled the prophecies uttered centuries before. The words quoted here are a combination of two prophecies, Isai. 62: 11 and Zech. 9: 9. They were familiar to the Jews, who therefore expected that their Messiah would enter Jerusalem riding on an ass. Jesus by fulfilling this prophecy presented himself as the Messiah.

5. **Tell ye the daughter of Sion**, that part of Jerusalem where David, and the kings after him, dwelt. Zion represented Jerusalem; the daughter of Zion, the people of Jerusalem, who were themselves the representatives of the people of God. **Behold, thy King cometh.** Jesus was the Messiah, the true king of the kingdom of God, which was now about to be established. His riding in this triumphal procession was an object lesson, a living parable, setting forth the fact that he was a king; that his kingdom was at hand; and also "the spiritual peculiarities and dignities and glory of the reign of Christ. It is a reign of peace, humility, and meekness, because of love." **Meek**, not warlike nor revengeful, but peaceful, doing good to his enemies, and bearing their persecutions with a gentle and forgiving spirit.

And sitting upon an ass. Riding on an ass instead of a horse presented him as the Prince of Peace, not as a hero of war. The horse was used especially for war, for dignity, and for display; the ass for the common uses of peace. His kingdom will be one of peace through righteousness, — peace with God, peace with the laws of the universe, peace with one another, peace of conscience, peace among all the faculties of the soul, — peace that passeth understanding, unspeakable and full of glory.

There was nothing degrading in riding an ass. Indeed, "the rich man's ass is a lordly beast. In size he is far ahead of anything of this kind we see here at home. His coat is as smooth and glossy as a horse's. His livery is shiny black, satiny white, or sleek mouse color."[3] But "the ass is the common beast for everybody to ride, and has been so from the days of the patriarchs and prophets." "It marked the *Prince as not above the people in his manner and ordering of earthly state.*"[1] He had the true kingly spirit, — pure, noble, holy; a spirit, not of pride, but of lowliness; not of exultation, but of daily service and helpfulness; sanctifying and exalting common things; not afar off in seclusion, but near the people; not receiving from the people, but giving to them, full of compassion, "the King of Love."

All this was in accordance with Jesus' plan of a spiritual kingdom. There was no herald, no standard of revolt, nothing to excite the antagonism of the Romans. There was no worldly pomp. It was a visible presentation of his spiritual Kingship, illustrating what he said to Pilate: that he was indeed a King, but that his

[1] Prof. Isaac H. Hall, *Sunday-School Times.* [2] Cook. [3] Zincke's *Egypt.*

6 And the disciples went, and did even as Jē'sus commanded appointed them,
7 And and brought the ass, and the colt, and put on them their clothes, garments; and they set *him* he sat thereon.
8 And a very great the most part of the multitude [r] spread their garments in the way; and others cut down branches from the trees, and strawed *them* spread them in the way.
9 And the multitudes that went before him, and that followed, cried, saying, [s] Hosanna to [t] the son of Dā'vid: [u] Blessed *is* he that cometh in the name of the Lord; Hosanna [v] in the highest.

r 2 Kin. 9. 13. *s* Cp. Rev. 7. 10. See Ps. 118. 25 (Heb.). *t* ch. 20. 30. *u* ch. 23. 39. Cited from Ps. 118. 26. *v* Luke 2. 14. Cp. Ps. 148. 1.

kingdom was not of this world. It was a kingdom of truth, of peace, of brotherhood, of love.

6. **The disciples . . . did (even) as Jesus commanded them.** As a King he had the loving obedience of his subjects.

7. **The ass, and the colt.** The untrained colt could be led and ridden more easily when accompanied by the mother. Jesus left Bethphage and rode toward Jerusalem, the royal city, the city of the Great King. Here his ancestor David reigned.

8. **And a very great multitude.** Rather, "the most part of the multitude," for there were some cold and scowling critics (Luke 19 : 39, 40). There were crowds of pilgrims from all parts of the country coming up to the Passover festival. By a census taken in the time of Nero, it was ascertained that there were 2,700,000 Jews present at the Passover. **Spread their garments in the way.** "This was a recognized act of homage to a king. So Jehu, when the officers of the army of Israel chose him as their ruler, walked upon the garments which they spread beneath his feet (2 Kings 9 : 13). So Agamemnon, tempted to an act of barbaric pomp, after the manner of Eastern kings, entered his palace at Mycenæ, walking upon costly carpets (Æschylus, *Agam.* 891)."[1] So, in later history, the young Sir Walter Raleigh, when Queen Elizabeth came to a miry part of the road, took off his new and costly plush mantle and spread it on the ground for the queen to walk over. **Others cut down branches.** The imperfect tense denotes continued action. "As Jesus advanced, they *kept cutting* branches and *spreading* them, and the multitude *kept crying*." "Matthew, Mark, and John use each a different word for *branches*. Matthew, a word meaning a young slip, or shoot; a *twig* as related to a *branch*. Mark, a word meaning a *litter* of branches and leaves cut from the fields near by; a mass of straw, rushes, or leaves *beaten together*, or strewed loose, so as to form a bed, or a carpeted way. John, strictly *palm branches*, the feathery fronds forming the tufted crown of the tree."[2] These leaves are often ten feet long. **And strawed,** spread, **them in the way.**[3]

9. **The multitudes that went before, and that followed.** "Two vast streams of people met on that day. The one poured out from the city; and, as they came through the gardens whose clusters of palm rose on the southeastern corner of Olivet, they cut down the long branches, and moved upward toward Bethany with shouts of welcome. From Bethany streamed forth the crowds who had assembled there the previous night. The two streams met midway. Half of the vast mass, turning round, preceded; the other half followed."[4]

Cried, saying, Hosanna. "Hosanna" is a rendering into Greek letters of the Hebrew words, "Save, we pray!" (Ps. 118 : 25); not save us, but save the King. It is like a shout of "Salvation! Salvation!" It is used as an expression of praise, like "Hallelujah," or "Hail." "It was a kind of *holy hurrah*. Had the event occurred in Rome, the shout would probably have been *Io triumphe!* Had it occurred in modern France, the people would have called out *Vive!* (*Vive le roi!*) It is thus remarkably like the aspiration or petition that is breathed in the national anthem, 'God save the Queen!' And as salvation, in its fulness, is just *life*, or *eternal life*, the petition breathed is equivalent to *Live!* or, *Live forever!* and is thus tantamount, in the original import, to the French *Vive!* and the Italian *Viva!*"[5]

Blessed is he that cometh in the name of

[1] Ellicott.

[2] Prof. M. R. Vincent, in *Word Studies*.

[3] "Herodotus records that when Xerxes was passing over the bridge of the Hellespont, the way before him was strewed with branches of myrtle, while burning perfumes filled the air. Quintius Curtius tells of the scattering of flowers in the way before Alexander the Great when he entered Babylon. Monier, in our own day, saw the way of a Persian ruler strewn with roses for three miles; while glass vessels filled with sugar were broken under his horse's feet, — the sugar being symbolical of prosperity."— Prof. Isaac H. Hall in *Sunday-School Times*.

[4] Dean Stanley, *Sinai and Palestine*.

[5] Morison.

10 And [w] when he was come into Jĕ-ru'să-lĕm, all the city was moved, stirred, saying, Who is this?

11 And the multitude multitudes said, This is [x] Je'sus the prophet of the prophet, Je'sus, from [y] Năz'a-rĕth of Găl'ĭ-lee.

w Mark 11. 11. *x* ver. 46. Luke 7. 16 & 13. 33 & 24. 19. John 4. 19 & 6. 14 & 7. 40 & 9. 17. Cp. Mark 6. 15 & Luke 9. 8, 19 & John 1. 21. *y* See ch. 2. 23.

the Lord. Sent and approved and foretold by the Lord, his Messiah. Hosanna in the highest. In the highest degree; in the highest strains; in the highest heavens. Putting together all the records, we see how manifold were the shouts of triumph. "Hosanna," "Hosanna to the son of David." "Blessed is he . . . Blessed is the King . . . Blessed is the King of Israel that cometh in the name of the Lord." "Blessed be the kingdom of our father David that cometh in the name of the Lord." "Peace in heaven and glory in the highest." "Hosanna in the highest." They were mostly taken from the 118th Psalm, that Messianic psalm which Chadwick calls "that great song of triumph, which told how the nations, swarming like bees, were quenched like the light fire of thorns, how the right hand of the Lord did valiantly, how the gates of righteousness should be thrown open for the righteous, and, more significant still, how the stone which the builders rejected should become the headstone of the corner."[1]

A Note of Sadness. One touching incident, by the way, is related by Luke only (19: 41–44). At one point in the descent, when the procession was amid wheat fields, flowers, and olive-trees, at a turn of the road, the great city of Jerusalem suddenly burst upon their vision. "In the clear atmosphere, it seemed as if a few steps would take one to the walls of the city."[2] "It rose terrace upon terrace, a city of palaces." "If," says Canon Tristram, "the prospect be impressive now, what must it have been when the grand colonnade of Herod, gleaming with white marble, ran along the southern face of that platform for a thousand yards, and reached a height of two hundred feet? Then, too, the golden gate showed its gorgeous façade; but the dazzling marble and gilding of Herod's temple dominated over all else." Here Jesus paused, and lamented over the city which might have been saved had its people been willing to accept of him; but which was doomed to destruction because it refused to repent and to accept the kingdom of God. "He was crossing the ground on which, a generation later, the Tenth Roman legion would be encamped, as part of the besieging force destined to lay all the splendors before him in ashes."[3] In vision he saw the most terrible siege on record, in which the besieged "fought for miserable scraps," chewed belts and shoes, and tore off the leather from their shields, and ate wisps of hay, and even then died by thousands from the horrors of famine; 97,000 were taken prisoners and 1,100,000 perished. The ground around the city was planted thick with crosses on which Jews were crucified, till there was room for no more. Did he not also look beyond this to the more awful destiny of those whom even the infinite love of God could not lead to repentance? Even in the midst of our rejoicing over the triumphs of Christianity, we should weep over those who will not come and be saved.

> "Of all sad words of tongue or pen,
> The saddest are these, It might have been."[4]

10. **Come into Jerusalem.** The royal city of the Jews. **All the city was moved** (ἐσείσθη), stirred, shaken as by an earthquake or a storm. Used by Matthew (8: 24) to express the effect of a violent tempest upon the waters of the sea of Galilee. See description in Rev. 6: 12–14. Waves of excited feeling swept over the multitude. They did not know what was coming next. The promised redemption, deliverance from Rome, the "good time coming" might be at hand. **Who is this?** Is this the Messiah who comes proclaiming himself a king?

11. **This is Jesus the prophet of (from) Nazareth.** The answer was true, but only a part of

[1] See any good *Roman History* for the story of Pompey's triumph, 90 years before this, when he was declared conqueror of the whole world.

Stanley's *Sinai and Palestine* has a beautiful description of a triumphal procession.

Robert Browning's *Poems*, "The Patriot," with whom at first

> "It was roses, roses all the way.
> The house roofs seemed to heave and sway,
> The church spires flamed, such flags they had."

But in one year all this was changed for binding ropes, and stones, and a scaffold.

Gen. Lew Wallace's *Ben-Hur* gives a vivid description of the scenes and circumstances of this period of Christ' life. See Robinson's *Researches*, i. 473, for modern illustration of spreading garments in the way for those the people would honor. *Land and Book*, new ed., vol. i. pp. 408–414.

Tissot's *Life of Our Lord Jesus* has a number of brilliant and realistic pictures of these scenes, reproduced in colors from his series of paintings.

[2] Frederick Bliss.

[3] Edersheim.

[4] Whittier

the truth. Jesus is revealed in a new light to most of them. This prophet from Nazareth now stood forth before the nation as the Messiah.

Practical Suggestions. (1) As these people cast their garments before Jesus as he rode in triumph, so we should cast our talents, our money, our time, all that we have, before him, and do all that we can to aid his cause, and hasten his success. It is a great privilege to have part in his triumph.

(2) Enthusiasm is a good thing for every one, for any cause that is worthy of enthusiasm. A noble enthusiasm uplifts the soul. Christianity is not dull, lifeless, insipid. There never has been anything on God's earth so adapted to kindle all the enthusiasm of the soul and to make it an enduring flame. Blessed are they who have felt, and continue to feel, a deep, abiding, glowing enthusiasm for Christ and his Gospel.

(3) We are accustomed to say that this same multitude, who on Sunday shouted "Hosanna,' cried "Crucify him!" on the following Friday; that "the whole enthusiasm of the multitude at the end is nothing more than the last upstreaming brilliancy of an evening sun before it vanishes beneath the horizon." But when we say that a city votes "no license" one year, and "license" the next, we do not mean that the same persons to any extent voted on opposite sides. Richard Glover is doubtless near the truth when he says, "The whole of that enthusiasm was not excitement. If most of the gladsome voices were silenced by the cross, very few, if any of them, took up the other cry, 'Crucify him!' Doubtless many of those who sang hosannas that day asked at Pentecost, 'What must I do to be saved?' and were among the first believers."

(4) The Choir Invisible. In all triumphal processions there is a 'choir invisible," accompanying the visible throng. Sometimes they are chanting dirges over the wrecks, the distress and poverty and bloodshed, ravaged fields, ruined villages, widows and orphans, crimes and cruelties, which the victories left in their path. Sometimes they are singing hymns of joy over the good accomplished, the progress of all that is good for man, intermingled with many a minor chord of sorrow.

If Christ had opened the eyes of those looking upon this scene as the eyes of Elisha's servant were opened, so that they might see the invisible and hear the inaudible, no pen could picture the real triumphal procession. They would have seen the vast multitude of those whom he had healed and comforted and saved from sin, — Lazarus and Bartimeus, the ten lepers, the widow of Nain's son, the ruler's daughter, Peter's mother-in-law, a host of those whom he had raised from the dead, those from whom he had cast out devils, the blind he had made to see, and the lame that now walked, the lepers he had cleansed, those who had been delivered from the bondage of their sins and brought into the light of the Gospel. There would join them the angels who sang at his birth, Moses and Elijah, who appeared on the Mount of Transfiguration, and the twelve legions of angels he once said were ready at his call. Heaven would swiftly have emptied itself, and all its choirs would joyfully have come down to do him honor, and sing their songs of joy over many sinners brought to repentance.

The triumphs of Cæsar and Pompey were but child's play to this. Not all of earth's monarchs together could have summoned such a procession. Imagination fails to paint the picture of Christ's real triumphal procession. What a picture this would make for an artist who would fill the air around and above the actual procession with these persons, as the space around Raphael's picture of the infant Jesus is filled with a cloud of angel faces.

(5) A Type of Christ's Triumphal March down the Ages. Jesus riding in this triumphal procession was an object lesson, a living parable, setting forth his triumphal march down the ages. "All the ideas that were incarnated in his career and emblazoned in his final sufferings and death and resurrection are destined to be triumphant."[1] "Palm Sunday also prefigured the entire history of the church here below. The history of the church is the march of the glorified Lord Jesus across continents and centuries. He marches towards the final domination of the whole world."[2] Commerce, railroads, printing presses, inventions, wealth, civilization, are aiding his triumph, paving his way, and advancing his glory. All are cast down before him in his onward march. And all the redeemed, ten thousand times ten thousand and thousands of thousands, are singing his hosannas, and joining in the song, "Worthy is the Lamb that was slain to receive power, and riches, and wisdom, and strength, and honour, and glory, and blessing. And every creature which is in heaven, and on the earth, and under the earth, and such as are in the sea, and all that are in them, heard I saying, Blessing, and honour, and glory, and power, *be* unto him that sitteth upon the throne, and unto the Lamb for ever and ever" (Rev. 5: 12, 13).

> "The gospel banner wide unfurled
> Shall wave in triumph o'er the world;
> And every creature, bond and free,
> Shall hail the glorious jubilee."[3]

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[1] Morison.

[2] Prof. Frederic Godet.

[3] Rev. Theron Brown's hymn, *The Banner of Immanuel*.

12 [z] And Jē'sus [went entered] into the temple of God, and cast out all them that sold and bought in the temple, and overthrew the tables of the [a] moneychangers, money-changers, and the seats of them that sold [b] the doves;

13 [And said and he saith] unto them, It is written, [c] My house shall be called [the a] house of prayer; but [d] ye [have made make] it a den of [thieves. robbers.]

z For vers. 12–16, see Mark 11. 15–18 & Luke 19. 45–47. Cp. John 2. 14–16. *a* Cp. Ex. 30. 13. *b* Lev. 1. 14 & 5. 7 & 12. 8. Luke 2. 24. *c* Cited from Isai. 56. 7. *d* Jer. 7. 11.

Monday, April 3, vers. 12–19.

All that Jesus did on this day was in close connection with the Triumphal Entry. His acts were kingly deeds, worthy of the Messiah and enforcing his claims.

I. CURSING THE BARREN FIG-TREE.

After the Triumphal Entry, Jesus returned from the city to Bethany, the home of Martha, Mary, and Lazarus, as he did every night (Luke 21: 37, 38). On his way back to the city Monday morning, Jesus saw the barren fig-tree, and laid a curse upon it. Mark says it was on this morning. Matthew does not contradict Mark, as Professor Gould says, but simply states the fact of the cursing in connection with the lessons from it taught the next morning when the disciples saw that the tree was withered. Mark states the facts chronologically, Matthew logically. These are familiar historical methods. And no one in ordinary history would charge with contradiction two historians, one of whom used one method, and the other the other method. We will treat this act in connection with the Tuesday morning lesson.

II. SECOND CLEANSING OF THE TEMPLE, vers. 12, 13.

Parallels. Mark 11: 15–18; Luke 19: 45, 46.

Compare a former cleansing early in his ministry (John 2: 13–17).

12. **Jesus went into the temple of God** to worship, and to teach religion, for which the Temple was built. It was his Father's house, and he was about his Father's business. **Cast out all them that sold and bought in the temple.** In the court of the Gentiles was the temple market, where animals, oil, wine, and other things necessary for sacrifices and temple worship were sold for the convenience of pilgrims who came from all parts of the world to offer sacrifices at the Passover season, and who could not bring their offerings with them. **Tables of the moneychangers,** who were necessary because the pilgrims came from all over the civilized world, and the temple tax must be paid in Jewish money. "The pilgrims brought with them the coinage of their own country, — Syrian, Egyptian, Greek, as the case might be, — and their money was either not current in Palestine, or, as being stamped with the symbols of heathen worship, could not be received into the corban, or treasury of the Temple."[1] "There are scores of moneychangers now in Jerusalem," according to Hon. Selah Merrill. "If you make a purchase, it is not one time in twenty that the person with whom you trade will have any change." **Sold doves,** for sacrifices.

The Excuse for these things being allowed in the temple courts was that it was very convenient for the worshippers, and the traffic was connected with sacred things and with true worship. Moreover, the traffic was only in that part of the Temple into which any heathen might enter, and not in the more sacred portions.

Reasons why it was Wrong. Turning the temple courts into a place of merchandise destroyed the very purpose for which the Temple was built, and changed its results into the very opposite. (1) For the dealers, the spirit of worship was lost. Instead of praying, they were bargaining. Instead of worshipping, they were making money.

(2) The opportunities for fraud were very great. The dealers had a monopoly and could charge such prices as they pleased. They were trading with strangers who often did not know the true values of the merchandise. The great crowds made the overcharging much easier. The result was that the temple court became "a den of thieves." Dishonesty in connection with religion does much more harm than elsewhere. It creates unbelievers. It undermines the power of religion. It turns men away from the truth.

(3) The court of the Gentiles was the place of prayer and worship for Gentiles. "My house shall be called a house of prayer for all the nations" (Mark 11: 17). It was the only place where they could worship in the Temple. It was missionary ground. It was the place for reaching the masses. All this was destroyed by the noise of the traffic, the disputing at the tables of the money-changers, the shouting and wrangling in bargaining for cattle, the tramping of oxen and sheep, and all the noise and confusion of the market-place. Worship was out of the question; prayer was interrupted. And the very object of the Temple was sacrificed to the greed of gain.

13. **It is written.** Isai. 56: 7; Jer. 7: 11. In

[1] Ellicott.

14 [e]And the blind and the lame came to him in the temple; and he healed them.

15 [f]And (But) when the chief priests and (the) scribes saw the wonderful things that he did, and the children (that were) crying in the temple and saying, [s]Hosanna to the son of Dā′vid; they were (sore displeased, moved with indignation,)

16 And (and) said unto him, Hearest thou what these (are saying, say?) And Jē′ṣus saith unto them, Yea; [g]have ye never (did) read, [h]Out of the mouth of [i]babes and sucklings thou hast perfected praise?

17 And [j]he left them, and [k]went (forth) out of the city (into, to) [l]Bethany; and (he) lodged there.

e ch. 11. 5 & 15. 31. *f* Cp. Luke 19. 39, 40. *s* ver. 9. Cp. Rev. 7. 10. See Ps. 118. 25 (Heb.). *g* ver. 42. ch. 12. 3, 5 & 19. 4 & 22. 31. *h* Cited from Ps. 8. 2 (Gk.). *i* ch. 11. 25. *j* ch. 16. 4. *k* Mark 11. 19. Cp. Luke 21. 37. *l* Mark 11. 1. Luke 19. 29 & 24. 50. John 11. 18.

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their seeming worship they were destroying the very soul of worship, and robbing God's house of its usefulness. Hence they made it a den of thieves. They not only robbed God, but were dishonest in their business transactions.

Practical. This was a type of the work of Christ in the temple of the heart, in the church, and in the world, cleansing them from all sinful habits, customs, feelings, and acts. "He is like a refiner's fire, and like fullers' soap: and he shall sit as a refiner and purifier of silver: and he shall purify the sons of Levi, and purge them as gold and silver" (Mal. 3: 2, 3). Again he exerted his kingly power by destroying the works of the great enemy, the devil.

III. MIRACLES OF HEALING, ver. 14.

14. **The blind and the lame came to him**, in the house of God, the place where all the troubled should come, **and he healed them.** A work of mercy more pleasing to him than the stern act of justice he had just performed. This, too, was a type of his kingly work among men, comforting, healing, blessing, redeeming his people from every outward and inward evil. These two kinds of work, purifying and saving from evil, are ever going on as the kingdom of Christ moves on to its final triumph.

IV. EDUCATING THE PEOPLE IN RELIGION.

From Luke 19: 47, we learn that Jesus taught daily in the Temple. The rest of this chapter and chapters 22 and 23 furnish examples of this royal work of the Messiah King.

V. THE CHILDREN'S HOSANNAS, vers. 15–17.

15. **The children**, boys, . . . **saying, Hosanna to the son of David.** They caught the enthusiasm from their elders, and entered with great zest into the praises of the Messiah. **They**, the chief priests, **were sore displeased.** Perhaps they dreaded lest the Roman garrison in the adjoining castle of Antonia should hear them and make trouble; but they were opposed to any approbation of Jesus that would make it dangerous for them to work their will upon him. They asked Jesus to put a stop to these loud praises (Luke 19: 39, 40). His reply was that the very stones would cry out if these held their peace. No power could repress the fact that here was the true Messiah. No hearts, less hard than stones, could repress their enthusiasm. Mark Antony says: —

> "Put a tongue
> In every wound of Cæsar, that should move
> The stones of Rome to rise and mutiny."

The stones of Jerusalem, when not one was left upon another, did cry out. "The superscription at Salzburg, in the rocks, *Te saxa loquntur*, 'The stones talk of thee,' is now history." Stones of *Nineveh*, *Babylon*, *Egypt*, tombs and temples, still cry out the truth of God's Word.

16. **Have ye never read.** In Ps. 8: 2 (Septuagint), How is it that you are not familiar with your own Scriptures? **Out of the mouth of babes and sucklings thou hast perfected praise?** The children and those who have childlike qualities give forth the most unalloyed praise.

Application. The church should take the best care that the children should join in the services of praise. They should arrange their services, and build their edifices, so that the children can thus have part. The older people will find that *thus* praise is perfected. The Gospel preached in so direct and simple a manner, the doctrines stated in so clear and simple a form that children can understand them, the services so devotional and helpful that children can be uplifted by them, will most help the largest number of people.

17. **And he left them.** He had finished Monday's work. **Into Bethany**, two miles out of the city.

18 *m* Now in the morning as he returned (unto) the city, *n* he hungered.

19 *n* And (when he saw / seeing) a fig tree (in) the (way / way side), he came to it, and found nothing thereon, but leaves only, and (said / he saith) unto it, Let there be no fruit (grow on / from) thee henceforward for ever. And (presently / immediately) the fig tree withered away.

20 And when the disciples saw (it), they marvelled, saying, How (soon is / did) the fig tree (withered / immediately wither) away!

21 And Jē'sus answered and said unto them, *o* Verily I say unto you, *p* If ye have faith, and *r* doubt not, ye shall not only do (this which is done / what is done) to the fig tree, but (also / even) if ye shall say unto this mountain, *s* Be thou (removed, / taken up) and (be thou) cast into the sea, it shall be done.

22 And *t* all things, whatsoever ye shall ask in prayer, *q* believing, ye shall receive.

23 ¶ *u* And when he was come into the temple, the chief priests and the elders

m For vers. 18–22, see Mark 11. 12–14, 20–24. *n* ch. 4. 2. *o* Cp. Luke 13. 6–9. *p* ch. 17. 20. *q* Cp. John 14. 12. *r* Acts 10. 20. Rom. 4. 20 & 14. 23. James 1. 6. *s* Cp. Ps. 46. 2 & 1 Cor. 13. 2 & Rev. 8. 8. *t* See ch. 7. 7. *u* For vers. 23–27, see Mark 11. 27–33 & Luke 20. 1–8.

Tuesday, April 4.

THE LAST DAY OF THE PUBLIC TEACHING OF JESUS, vers. 20–46.

I. THE BARREN FIG-TREE AND ITS LESSONS, vers. 18–22.

PLACE. On the slope of Olivet.

TIME. Early in the morning, on the way from Bethany to Jerusalem.

PARALLEL. Mark 11 : 12–26.

Compare Matt. 17 : 20, 21.

18. **Now in the morning**, one morning, Monday, **he hungered.** This is given as the reason why Jesus took notice of the fig-tree. Quesnell suggests that he had spent the night after his triumph in fasting and prayer.

19. **Saw a fig tree . . . and found nothing thereon, but leaves only.** Jesus had reason to expect fruit on the tree, because of "the ostentatious show of leaves. The fig often comes with or even before the leaves, and especially on the early kind. If there was no fruit on this leafy tree, it might justly be condemned as barren."[1] It was before the regular season of figs, and the fig-trees were generally bare. But some varieties are earlier than others, and sometimes in warm sunny nooks the trees develop weeks earlier than in other situations. "In walking along this same Bethany road we came upon just such a precocious fig-tree. It was, in all likelihood, the very road on which our Lord had travelled; it was the same week in the year, for it was the Passover week when we were on Olivet; and while in general the few fig-trees that we saw were showing little more than the first signs of life, there was one more favorably placed, which was several weeks in advance of all the others, all green with foliage, and with ripe fruit underneath it. We plucked a branch and brought it home with us. The large leaves had shrivelled, but the fruit was still sweet two months afterward."[2] **Let no fruit grow on thee henceforward for ever.** This was the sentence of a judge, rather than a curse. The tree was an object lesson of hypocrisy, and it stood there by the roadside a marked tree, for it soon **withered away**, its dead leaves and barren branches teaching the natural and necessary punishment of hypocrisy. It was a picture of the Jewish nation as represented by its leaders, "whose prime and patent fault was hypocrisy or false pretence, and here he finds a tree guilty of the same thing."[3] The sentence Jesus pronounced on the tree was a symbol of what was certain to come on the Jewish nation unless they repented. Their opportunity to bear the good fruit they were made to bear, in becoming the kingdom of God in righteousness, was gone forever.

20. **When the disciples saw it**, as they went by it the next morning. **They marvelled** at the power of Jesus' simple word.

21. **If ye have faith, and doubt not**, etc. See on 17 : 20, 21, concerning the faith that removes mountains.

22. **Whatsoever ye shall ask in prayer.** See on 7 : 7–11.

II. THE PHARISEES CHALLENGE JESUS' AUTHORITY, vers. 23–27.

PLACE. In the Temple at Jerusalem.

PARALLELS. Mark 11 : 27–33; Luke 20 : 1–8.

23. **The chief priests and the elders**, the leaders of the Jews, **came unto him as he was teaching**, and teaching many things contrary to

[1] Wm. M. Thomson, *Land and Book.* [2] Rev. A. Thomson, D. D. [3] *Int. Crit. Com.*

of the people came unto him *r* as he was teaching, and said, *w* By what authority doest thou these things? and who gave thee this authority?

24 And Jē′ṣus answered and said unto them, I also will ask you one thing, which if ye tell me, I in like wise will tell you by what authority I do these things.

25 The baptism of Jŏhn, *x* whence was it? *y* from heaven or of men? And they reasoned with themselves, saying, If we shall say, From heaven; he will say unto us, *z* Why then did ye not believe him?

26 But if we shall say, Of men; *a* we fear the people; for all hold Jŏhn *b* as a prophet.

27 And they answered Jē′ṣus, and said, We cannot tell. And he also said unto them, Neither tell I you by what authority I do these things.

28 ¶ *c* But what think ye? A certain man had two sons; and he came to the first, and said, Son, go work to-day in my vineyard.

r See ch. 26. 55. *w* Cp. Ex. 2. 14 & John 1. 25 & Acts 4. 7. *x* Cp. ch. 13. 54. *y* Luke 15. 18, 21. John 3. 27. *z* ver. 32. Luke 7. 30. *a* ver. 46. ch. 14. 5. *b* Cp. John 5. 35. See ch. 11. 9. *c* ch. 17. 25 & 18. 12. *d* ver. 33. ch. 20. 1.

their doctrine, and thus undermining their authority. **And said, By what authority doest thou these things**, such as cleansing the Temple of cattle and money-changers, teaching his doctrines, presenting himself as the Messiah. They were elected. They based their position on their Scriptures; they were leaders of a divinely appointed ritual, of a divinely authorized religion. But who chose Jesus? What right had he to assume so much authority? They could easily have found out had they wished. But they would not see. And they would have questioned or denied his authority had he stated it.

24. Jesus therefore refused to answer, but **said unto them, I also will ask you one thing**, one word, one question, not to puzzle them, but to lead them to answer their own question in answering his. Therefore, he continues, **which if ye tell me**, answer me truly, **I in like wise will tell you by what authority I do these things.**

25. **The baptism of John, whence was it? from heaven, or of men?** Tell me what was John's authority for his teaching, represented by baptism, and I will tell you what mine is, for both are from the same source. **They reasoned with themselves**, consulted together, so as to agree upon an answer; not as to what was true, but what it was policy to say. **If we shall say, From heaven**, that is, that he had divine authority. **He will say, . . . Why did ye not then believe him?** It would be too violently inconsistent, and would destroy their authority, if they acknowledged John to be a prophet, and then did not believe him and receive him as such. But if John had divine authority, so much more had Jesus. John himself declared Jesus to be the Messiah. Could the Pharisees acknowledge John's words to be divine, and then reject his teaching that Jesus was the Messiah?

26. **But if we shall say, Of men**, *i. e.*, that John was an impostor, **we fear the people**, lest they should rise up and stone them (Luke).

27. **They answered . . . We cannot tell.** We do not know. Their reply was given in the hearing of the people, and was a sad confession of incompetency and ignorance for them to make, but less destructive than any answer would have been. **He said unto them, Neither tell I you.** "Why should he answer it, if they had made up their minds that they would not be guided in their conduct by the evidence of the truth, but only by passion, prepossession, pelf, and the pinch of popular pressure? Why cast pearls of knowledge before such swinish natures as will only trample them in the mire, and then turn aside to rend you?"[1]

III. THE PARABLE OF THE TWO SONS, vers. 28–32.

28. **But what think ye?** He would not answer their question, but he would give them a parable to think of, a mirror in which they could see their own characters, and be led to repentance. **A certain man**, representing God, our Father in heaven, **had two sons.** "Here, as at Luke 15: 11, are described, under the image of two sons of one father, two great moral divisions of men, under one or other of which might be ranged almost all with whom our blessed Lord in his teaching and preaching came in contact."[2] **Son, go work to day in my vineyard**, representing the world where there was work to do for God, and his kingdom, and for God's children.

[1] Morison. [2] Trench.

29 He And he answered and said, I will not: but afterward he [f]repented himself, and went.

30 And he came to the second, and said likewise. And he answered and said, I *go*, sir: and went not.

31 Whether of them the twain did the will of his his father? They say unto him, The first. Jē'sus saith unto them, Verily I say unto you, That that [f]the publicans and [g]the harlots go into the [h]kingdom of God before you.

32 For John came unto you [i]in the way of righteousness, and [j]ye believed him not: but [k]the publicans and the harlots believed him: and ye, when ye had seen it, repented not saw it, did not even [e]repent yourselves afterward, that ye might believe him.

e ver. 32. ch. 27. 3. Heb. 7. 21. *f* Luke 7. 29. *g* Luke 7. 37–50. *h* See ch. 12. 28. *i* Cp. ch. 3. 8–12, 15 & Prov. 8. 20 & 2 Pet. 2. 21. *j* ver. 25. ch. 11. 18. *k* Luke 3. 12, 13.

29. **I will not.** This son represents those who make no pretension to the service of God, but stand opposed to it in doctrine, in character, and in life, such as the publicans and harlots of ver. 31, who openly and boldly transgress the laws of God. **But afterward he repented, and went.** Many of the worst and most flagrant sinners, when they heard John the Baptist, repented, and turned from their sins with loathing, and entered upon a new life. The Greek word here for repent (*μεταμεληθείς*) is a different word from that ordinarily used for repentance (*μετανοέω*).[1] "It may be simply what our fathers were wont to call *hadiwist* (had-I-wist, or known better, I should have acted otherwise)."[2]

30. **And he came to the second . . . And he answered and said, I go, sir.** This son represents those who profess to be religious and to serve God, who are particular about ritual and form and outward observances, and have been kept from crime and disreputable, loathsome, unpopular sins; of which class a large part of the Pharisees, the scribes, the religious leaders, were representatives. **And went not.** They were hypocrites, whited sepulchres, "which indeed appear beautiful outward, but are within full of dead men's bones, and of all uncleanness" (23:27). They lacked true piety, faith, and love to God and man, and all real virtue. They were selfish, and proud, and hard hearted. Chapter 23 gives a full description of their character.

31. **Whether of them twain did the will of his father? They,** entirely unconscious of the application, **say, . . . The first.** Jesus saith unto them. He now makes the personal application. **Publicans and . . . harlots go into the kingdom of God before you,** they repent and become real members of the kingdom of heaven, by accepting its principles, living its life, and seeking after its character.

32. **For John came, etc.** For proof of his statement he points them to the facts, to what had actually taken place before their eyes. There was no escape from the indictment.

NOTE. (1) The refusal of the first son, and the conduct he represents, are not approved, but only his change of life and character.

(2) It is not an uncommon experience, that public flagrant sins despised by the whole community, when seen in the light of the Gospel or of prophetic denunciation, open the eyes of the sinner to the vileness of his character and life, and the danger of his course. Especially is this true of an unexpected outbreak into sin by one who has hitherto been fairly good outwardly, and did not know the evil that was within him.

(3) The difficulty with the Pharisees, and all whom they represent, lies in the fact that they are self-satisfied, and partly blind to their real condition. Their sins are those of character, of motive, of selfishness, restrained in some degree by exterior influences, so as not to appear as bad outwardly, as the conduct of those who, with less evil, have fewer restraints. A few full-grown weeds in a garden *appear* greater evils than the soil full of seeds of bad plants that have not yet sprung up above the surface.

"If the righteousness of the law is satisfied with itself; if, cold and loveless and proud, it imagines that it wants nothing, and so refuses to submit itself to the righteousness of faith, then far better that the sinner should have had his eyes opened to perceive his misery and guilt, even though it had been by means of manifest and grievous transgressions, than that he should remain in this ignorance of his true state, of that which is lacking to him still; just as it would be better that disease, *if in the frame*, should take a decided shape, so that it might be felt and acknowledged to be disease, and then met and overcome, — than that it should be secretly lurking in, and pervading, the whole system, and because secretly,

[1] For a full and interesting discussion, see Prof. M. R. Vincent's *Word Studies*. [2] Trench.

33 ¶ [l] Hear another parable: There was a certain man that was a householder, which planted a [m] vineyard, and [n] hedged it round about, set a hedge about it, and digged a winepress in it, and built a tower, and [o] let it out to husbandmen, and [p] went into a far another country:

l For vers. 33–46, see Mark 12. 1–12 & Luke 20. 9–19. *m* ver. 28. Ps. 80. 8. Isai. 5. 1. *n* Isai. 5. 2. *o* S. of S. 8. 11, 12. *p* ch. 25. 14, 15. Cp. Mark 13. 34.

its very existence denied by him whose life it was threatening." [1]

IV. PARABLE OF THE VINEYARD, vers. 33–41.

PLACE. The Temple Courts.

PARALLELS. Mark 12 : 1–9; Luke 20 : 9–16.

33. **Hear another parable.** Jesus again sets before the rulers a picture of their real attitude toward the kingdom of God and its consequences, so that seeing themselves in this mirror they might be led to repentance. Severe as his charges were, they were spoken in love, and, in the deepest sense, in behalf of the rulers, in order that they might repent and save themselves and their nation, as William of Orange carried on the war against the Emperor Philip in the name and in behalf of him against whom he fought.

THE OWNER OF THE VINEYARD. **There was a certain householder,** a landed proprietor, owner of an estate. This householder represents God, who is the creator and owner of all things. He owns this world. He owns the church. He owned the Jewish nation; they were his peculiar people. He owns the kingdom of heaven.

THE VINEYARD. **Planted a vineyard.** Palestine was a country of vineyards, and Jesus took his illustration from a most familiar occurrence. Isaiah uses a similar illustration. "The image of the kingdom of God as a vine-stock or as a vineyard runs through the whole Old Testament (Deut. 32: 32; Ps. 80: 8–16; Isai. 5: 1–7; 27: 1–7; Jer. 2: 21; Ezek. 15: 1–6; 19: 10); and has this especial fitness, that no property was considered to yield so large a return (Cant. 8: 11, 12). None was therefore of such price and esteem. It no doubt belongs to the fitness of the image, that a vineyard does, if it is to bring forth richly, require the *most* diligent and never-ceasing care; that there is no season in the year in which much has not to be done in it. Virgil presses this very strongly in words not unworthy to be kept in mind by all to whom a spiritual vineyard has been committed. (See *Georg.*, 2: 397–419)." [1]

The vineyard represented the kingdom of God, which was entrusted to the Jews, planted by God with the rich and fruitful vines of the knowledge of God, his commandments, the institutions of religion, and his revealed word. This vineyard was fertile in every good, infinite in possibilities of blessing for themselves and for the world.

It represents (1) the Christian church. Its origin and life are from God. He has committed to it his truth, his holy Spirit, the Sabbath, intelligence, piety, property, influence, Sunday-schools, missions, organization, every means and opportunity for bringing forth every good fruit of the Spirit. (2) It represents our individual lives, and all the good God has entrusted to us, — our souls, our minds, our bodies, our time, — all to be cared for, and to be cultured, and made to bring forth every good word and work. (3) It represents the nation. To each people God has entrusted a vineyard, marvellously fruitful, for the cultivation of which they are responsible. Patriotism, real, true patriotism, is a religious duty.

THE PROTECTING HEDGE. **And hedged it round about,** "possibly of the thorny wild aloe, common in the East." [2] "The word *hedge* here denotes a fence, of whatever material made. And no doubt the great majority of fences that surrounded the Judean vineyards, if not the whole of them, would consist of walls or 'dikes,' composed either exclusively of stones, or of stones and baked mud combined. Sometimes, however, for the sake of further protection from wild beasts, thorny shrubs were added or intermingled." [3]

The hedge represented all that God did to protect and defend the nation. The land of Palestine itself is hedged about by the sea, the mountains, and the desert, as England by the sea, as Greece and Rome by sea and mountains. The law, the divine Word, the institutions of the Jews, separated them from the evil moral influences of other nations. God's promises and watchful care were their perpetual defence.

THE WINEPRESS. **And digged a winepress.** Lit., "hewed out," from the solid rock. "For the winepress of to-day a hollow place, usually a rock, is scooped out, considerably deeper at one end than the other. The grapes are put into this trough, and two or more persons, with naked feet and legs, descend into it, where they jump up and down, crushing the fruit as they trample on it, while to enliven their labor they often sing at the same time. The juice flows into the lower part of the excavation." [4]

The winepress represented all the institutions

[1] Trench. [2] Prof. Vincent. [3] Morison. [4] Prof. Hackett, *Illustrations of Scripture.*

34 And when the time (season) of the fruit (fruits) drew near, he sent his servants to the husbandmen, that they might receive the fruits of it. (to receive his fruits.)

and means of grace conferred upon the Jewish people, for their prosperity and usefulness; and now, all the influences God confers on us to make us fruitful, — the Bible, the Sabbath, Christian homes, the influences of the Spirit. Isaiah shows how much in every way God had done for his people to make them a holy and worthy nation (5: 1–7).

THE TOWER. **And built a tower.** To be used for the watchmen who guarded the vineyard, and during the vintage as an abode for the workers and a place of recreation, and perhaps for storing the fruit and the grape juice. These towers were sometimes forty or fifty feet high.

THE HUSBANDMEN. "There were three modes of dealing with land. According to one of these, the laborers employed received a certain portion of the fruits, say a third or a fourth of the produce. The other two modes were, either that the tenant paid a money rent to the proprietor, or else that he agreed to give the owner a definite amount of the produce, whether the harvest had been good or bad. Such leases were given by the year or for life; sometimes the lease was even hereditary, passing from father to son. There can scarcely be a doubt that it is the latter kind of lease which is referred to in the parable: the lessees being bound to give the owner a certain amount of fruits in their season." [1] "For corn land the tenant pays two thirds of the produce. In the case of vineyards and other permanent crops, he retains but one fourth, but the owner provides all fences and fixtures." [2]

The husbandmen represented first the rulers of the Jews, and then the nation as a whole. All church members are the husbandmen. So are all the people of our nation. In his lesser sphere each individual is a husbandman.

THE ABSENCE OF THE LORD. **And went into a far country,** rather, as in the R. V., "another country." He went abroad. He left his tenants in charge with everything needful for their work, and thus by his absence tested their faithfulness, and gave them opportunity to develop their characters and fulfil their duties. This was for a long time (Luke).

The absence of the lord represents the fact that for a long period the guidance of the nation was entrusted to rulers and prophets, and the nation had the guarding of the precious truths and institutions entrusted to them, without direct interference from God. Christ did not come till fifteen hundred years after the planting of the nation, and four hundred after the last prophet, Malachi.

And still God entrusts to nation, to church, and to individual the things he has committed to their charge, without direct interference. For so only can they be trained and proved.

THE RENT. We have always to pay rent for every privilege. "For their land the Jews must pay the rent of national purity, justice, patriotism; for their spiritual privileges, the rent of faith and obedience; for office, the rent of service to God and man." [3] For every vineyard entrusted to us, every privilege and blessing, God has a right to expect from us the fruits in the season thereof. These fruits, toward God, are gratitude, love, obedience, worship, consecration of time, talents, and property; and toward men, all the fruits of the Spirit, — intelligence, generosity, character, growth.

NOTE, that as the cultivator of the vineyard was to enjoy the fruits it bore, and the more fruitful it was, and the more industriously he cultivated it for the owner the more abundant and delightful was his own reward, so it is with those to whom God has entrusted his spiritual vineyard; every fruit God requires is best for themselves. He wants them to use and enjoy. He never "muzzles the ox that treadeth out the corn." All that pleases him blesses us.

THE SEASON OF INGATHERING. 34. **And when the time** (or season) **of the fruit drew near.** He sent not before, but at the time when fruits were naturally expected.

The season of fruits was not any definite time, but every occasion when God had reason to expect the results. Sometimes it was courage and faith; sometimes patience; sometimes efforts to benefit the other nations; at all times obedience, and the gradual development of nobility of character, beautiful daily life, care for the poor, depth and purity of worship, larger intelligence, liberty, and insight, closer communion with God, — each in the degree that God's people had had time to acquire, just as we expect different fruits from an older child than from a younger one.

The season of fruits with us is the time when God has a right to expect us to believe in Jesus; when good works are rightfully required, more and larger and more perfect as we go on in the Christian life; when there are special opportunities for serving God and man, special trials, special calls, seasons of revival.

THE SERVANTS. **He sent his servants to the husbandmen.** The prophets and all faith-

[1] Edersheim, *Life and Times of Jesus.* [2] Tristram. [3] R. Glover.

35 [q] And the husbandmen took his servants, and beat one, and killed another, and [r] stoned another.

36 [s] Again, he sent other servants more than the first: and they did unto them (likewise, in like manner).

37 But (last of all, afterward) he sent unto them his son, saying, They will reverence my son.

38 But (when) the husbandmen, (when they) saw the son, (they) said among themselves, [t] This is the heir; come, [u] let us kill him, and (let us seize on, take) his inheritance.

q ch. 5. 12 & 22. 6 & 23. 34, 37. Cp. 2 Chr. 24. 19 & 36. 15, 16 & Neh. 9. 26 & Jer. 37. 15 & 38. 6 & Acts 7. 52 & 2 Cor. 11. 24–26 & 1 Thess. 2. 15 & Heb. 11. 36, 37. *r* Cp. 2 Chr. 24. 21 & John 10. 31–33 & Acts 7. 59. *s* ch. 22. 4. *t* Heb. 1. 2. Cp. John 1. 11 & Rom. 8. 17. *u* Cp. 1 Kin. 21. 19.

ful priests and teachers. So with us the servants are teachers, preachers, parents, every special call to love and serve God, all influences of the Spirit, every open door, every opportunity that invites us to a higher and better service of God and man. That they might receive the fruits of it. The householder's share, his stipulated rent in fruits.

Maltreatment of the Servants. 35. **Took his servants, and beat one.** The gradual growth of the outrage is more clearly traced in Mark. (1) The first servant they "caught, beat, and sent away empty;" (2) at the second they "cast stones, and wounded him in the head, and sent him away shamefully handled;" (3) they killed others in various ways. **Killed another, and stoned another.** Some of the prophets were not merely maltreated, but actually put to death. "Thus, if we may trust Jewish tradition, Jeremiah was stoned by the exiles in Egypt, Isaiah sawn asunder by King Manasseh; and, for an ample historical justification of this description, see Jer., chaps. 37, 38; 1 Kings 18: 13; 22: 24–27; 2 Kings 6: 31; 21: 16; 2 Chron. 24: 19–22; 36: 16; and also Acts 7: 52; and the whole passage finds a parallel in the words of the apostle (Heb. 11: 36)."[1]

36. **Again, he sent other servants.** He did all that was possible. It is quite remarkable how many of the prophets were, at one time or another, ill treated by the Jews, — Moses, Elijah, Elisha, Jeremiah, Isaiah, Amos, Zechariah. And not long before this John the Baptist had perished, a martyr to his faithfulness. Luke adds that they "sent him away empty." The reforms, the virtues, the religious life which the Lord had a right to expect were not given. The nation as a whole was disappointing. The picture of what the people might have been, placed beside the picture of what they were, presents a contrast like that of a summer garden and a winter pasture land. The behavior of these husbandmen is only a picture of the way impenitent men still treat God's messengers of mercy.

He sends his Only Son. 37. **But last of all he sent unto them his son.** It is only by placing together the three accounts that we can understand the full beauty and power of this passage: "Then said the lord of the vineyard, What shall I do? Having yet therefore one son, his well-beloved, he said, I will send my beloved son. He sent him also last unto them, saying, They will reverence my son." "This was the last and crowning effort of divine mercy; after which, on the one side, all the resources even of heavenly love are exhausted; on the other, the measure of sins is perfectly filled up." **They will reverence my son.** He was so great, so good, so powerful, so like his father, and his closest representative, that the father had a right to expect that he would be treated better than the servants he had sent.

Consider the infinite greatness and preciousness of this expression of God's desire that all men should be saved. (1) The highest possible expression of God's love for man is the Almighty Creator sending his beloved Son from the highest heaven to this smallest corner of his universe to save sinful men. (2) In Jesus, his Son, are the highest possible powers that can work together for the salvation of man, — the forgiveness of sin, the light of truth about God and immortality, the strongest motives, hope, fear, love, duty, — the influences of the life-giving spirit, a perfect example. There is no conceivable influence or power by which men can be drawn to God which is not found in Jesus Christ.

38. **Said among themselves, This is the heir.** Christ is the heir of all things (Heb. 1: 2). The whole world is his inheritance, and will become his in reality when all the kingdoms of earth become his kingdom, and all hearts accept him as king. Did the Jews know that they were putting to death the heir, the Son of God? Jesus says, "Father, forgive them; they know not what they do." They did not realize it, but they knew they were doing wrong. They had fears lest he

[1] Trench.

39 And they [caught: took] him, and [v] cast [him: him forth] out of the vineyard, and [slew him.: killed him.]
40 [w] When [the lord therefore: therefore the lord] of the vineyard [cometh,: shall come,] what will he do unto those husbandmen?
41 They say unto him, [x] He will miserably destroy those [wicked: miserable] men, and [y] will let out [his: the] vineyard unto other husbandmen, which shall render him the fruits in their seasons.

v Heb. 13. 12. *w* Cp. ch. 24. 50 & 25. 19. *x* Luke 19. 27. *y* ver. 43. Acts 13. 46 & 18. 6 & 28. 28. Cp. ch. 8. 11, 12.

might be the Messiah. They shut their eyes lest they should see. They sinned against evidence. **Let us kill him, and let us seize on his inheritance**, that it may be ours (Luke). This alludes to the Eastern custom that, if an owner was not to be found, and the occupier pays the taxes for six years, he can claim the property. The owner, in this case, was in a far country, and had sent servant after servant, but had not enforced his rights. When the legal heir appeared they were alarmed for their tenure, and hoped that by killing him, unless his father came in person, the estate would become absolutely their own."[1]

If Jesus was the Messiah, and he was introducing the kingdom of God, the whole spirit of which was so different from theirs, then they would lose their places as rulers, as teachers, as men of influence, their authority over the people, and their chief business. They were so connected with a system, and with wrong ideas, principles, and customs, which must pass away with Christ's reign, that if Christ prevailed they must fall. But they imagined that if they could destroy Christ they could continue in possession of the inheritance, be rulers over Israel, teachers and leaders of the people, the possessors of the nation, living on the fat of the land, still renting the temple courts to money-changers.

39. **Cast him out of the vineyard.** They rejected Jesus and refused to let him have his place as the Messiah, with perhaps an allusion to the fact that he was crucified outside of the walls of the Holy City (Heb. 13: 11–13). **And slew him**, as the Jews were intent on doing to Jesus. They killed that they might possess; but it was the shortest road to entire loss. Those who reject Christ in order that they may keep possession of themselves, their pleasures and hopes, have taken the shortest and surest way to lose them.

THE RESULT OF THEIR CONDUCT. 40. **When the lord therefore of the vineyard cometh.** When the time comes for God to take open notice of this rejection, and to make a settlement with the nation. And it came very soon. **What will he do unto those husbandmen?** Every possible method of leading them to right conduct had been exhausted. God does all that it is possible for love to do to save us, and then nothing is left but perdition. If the love of God, shown in sending his Son Christ Jesus to save us, if all that was done for us on the cross, will not touch our hearts and make us choose God, then nothing will. The last hope is gone when we reject Christ.

41. **They say unto him.** That is, some of the chief priests and elders (ver. 23), who did not quite comprehend the application of the parable to themselves. **He will miserably destroy those wicked** (miserable) **men**, etc. In the Greek, *miserable* and *wicked* are allied words. There was nothing else to do. There was no other way in which the vineyard could be preserved. It was a simple matter of justice. And yet the justice was so terrible that the *people*, who seem first to have caught a glimpse of Jesus' meaning, cried out *God forbid*, when they saw their rulers thus condemning themselves (Luke).[2]

And will let out his vineyard unto other husbandmen. The Jews were destroyed as a nation, and the kingdom of God was transferred to the Gentiles, as stated by the apostle when he said, "Lo, we turn to the Gentiles" (Acts 13: 46). The others are the Christian church, which is grafted upon the old tree from which the branches were cut off. Every one who believes in Jesus becomes a child of Abraham, and an inheritor of the promises (Gal. 3: 7, 9, 29). In the Christian kingdom of God are fulfilled the promises made of old. In the summer of A. D. 70, forty years after this parable was spoken, Jerusalem was destroyed, and the Temple was burned and laid in ruins by the Roman army under Titus, after the most terrible siege on record. And the Jews have been dispersed over the earth ever since. Yet, if they had been faithful, they might have been the leading nation in the world, walking as kings and princes among men, the joy of the whole earth, shedding the light of God's truth and righteousness over the nations. But they would not; they rejected the Messiah and perished.

[1] Canon Tristram.

[2] See the descriptions of the destruction of Jerusalem in Josephus, and in Charlotte Elizabeth's *Judea Capta*.

42 Jē'şus saith unto them, [z] Did ye never read in the scriptures, [a] The stone which the builders rejected, the The same is become was made the head of the corner: this is the This was Lord's doing, and from the Lord, And it is marvellous in our eyes?

43 Therefore say I unto you, [x] The kingdom of God [b] shall be taken away from you, and shall be given to a nation [c] bringing forth the fruits thereof.

44 And [d] whosoever shall fall he that falleth on this stone shall be broken: to pieces: but [e] on whomsoever it shall fall, [f] it will grind scatter him to powder. as dust.

45 And when the chief priests and the Phăr'ĭ-sees had heard his parables, they perceived that he spake of them.

46 But And [g] when they sought to lay hands hold on him, [h] they feared the multitude, multitudes, because they took him [i] for a prophet.

z ver. 16. *a* Acts 4. 11. 1 Pet. 2. 7. Cited from Ps. 118. 22, 23, which see. *b* Cp. Luke 14. 24. *c* Cp. ch. 3. 10 & Isai. 5. 4, 7. *d* Isai. 8. 14, 15. Rom. 9. 32, 33. 1 Pet. 2. 8. *e* Dan. 2. 34, 35, 44, 45. *f* Amos 9. 9. Wisd. 11. 20. *g* Mark 11. 18. Luke 19. 47, 48. John 7. 25, 30, 44. Cp. ch. 26. 4. *h* ver. 26. *i* Cp. ver. 11.

V. THE REJECTED STONE, vers. 42–46.

42. **Jesus saith unto them**, looking at them with an intense, earnest gaze (Luke), as if seeing into their very souls, or pityingly beholding them in a vision of the days to come: **Did ye never read in the scriptures**, referring them to Psalms 118: 22, 23, — a Psalm which the Jews applied to the Messiah. Peter twice applied it to him (Acts 4: 11; 1 Pet. 2: 7). **The stone which the builders rejected, the same is become the head of the corner.** The cornerstone on which the superstructure rests. The most important stone in the building. "In the primary meaning of the Psalm the illustration seems to have been drawn from one of the stones, quarried, hewn, and marked, away from the site of the Temple, which the builders, ignorant of the head architect's plans, or finding on it no mark (such as recent explorations in Jerusalem have shown to have been placed on the stones of Solomon's Temple in the place where they were quarried, to indicate their position in the future structure of the fabric), had put on one side as having no place in the building, but which was found afterwards to be that on which the completeness of the structure depended, — on which, as the chief corner-stone, the two walls met and were bonded together."[1] **This is the Lord's doing.** He has charge of all things. All things are under his control, and in a wonderful way, **marvellous in our eyes**, strange and unexpected, he will see to it that nothing shall hinder the coming of his kingdom.

43. **Therefore say I unto you.** Here Jesus applies the parable directly to them, and foretells what actually took place a few years later.

44. **And whosoever shall fall on this stone**, etc. "They fall on the stone who are offended at Christ in his low estate (Isai. 8: 14; 53: 2; Luke 2: 34; 4: 29; John 4: 44); of this sin his hearers were already guilty. They on whom the stone falls are those who set themselves in self-conscious opposition against the Lord; who, knowing what he is, do yet to the end oppose themselves to him and to his kingdom. These shall not merely fall and be broken; for one might recover himself, though with some present harm, from such a fall as this; but on them the stone shall fall as from heaven, and shall grind them to powder."[2] "The former clause of the verse describes the penal consequences of unbelief during the day of probation (to those who stumble ever certain difficulties about Christ), the latter, the punishment of the finally impenitent."[3]

45. **Perceived that he spake of them.** They at last saw the application of the parable, and immediately went out unconsciously to fulfil it.

46. **They feared the multitude**, who had come from other parts of Palestine, and from other countries, and who were more free from prejudice, and had little at stake. He was an especial friend of many of the Galileans, whom he had taught and healed.

[1] E. H. Plumptre, D. D. See the legend of the rejected stone told in many places.

[2] Trench.

[3] Morison.

CHAPTER 22.

SECTION XIX.—THE LAST DAYS OF JESUS' PUBLIC LIFE (*continued*).

TUESDAY, APRIL 4. THE LAST DAY OF THE PUBLIC TEACHING OF JESUS (*continued*).

6. PARABLE OF THE MARRIAGE OF THE KING'S SON, vers. 1–14.

Then follows a series of entangling questions through which it was sought to entrap Jesus into saying something on account of which they could bring charges against him.

7. QUESTION BY THE HERODIANS CONCERNING PAYING TRIBUTE TO CÆSAR, vers. 15–22.

8. QUESTION BY THE SADDUCEES CONCERNING THE RESURRECTION, vers. 23–33.

9. QUESTION BY A SCRIBE OF THE PHARISEES CONCERNING THE GREATEST COMMANDMENT, vers. 34–40.

10. JESUS, HAVING ANSWERED WISELY, FINALLY SILENCES THEM BY A QUESTION IN RETURN CONCERNING THE EXPECTED MESSIAH, vers. 41–46.

1 AND Jē'sus answered and *j* spake (again in parables) unto them, (again by parables, and said, saying,)
2 *k* The kingdom of heaven is (like, likened) unto a certain king, which made *l* a marriage (feast) for his son,

j ch. 13. 34. *k* For vers. 2–14, cp. Luke 14. 16–24. *l* See Rev. 19. 7.

VI. PARABLE OF THE MARRIAGE OF THE KING'S SON, vers. 1–14.

Compare the Parable of the Great Feast in Luke 14: 15–24.

1. **And Jesus answered.** To the feelings awakened by his former discourse, to the needs and circumstances. **Spake unto them,** the leaders (21: 45), . . . **by parables.** By the parabolic form of discourse. For the reason why he used this method, see on 13: 13–15. By this picturesque method he could best compel attention to unwelcome truths, and make the truth most clear.

2. **The kingdom of heaven.** The new order of things which Jesus had come to establish upon the earth, in which, as king, ruling over the hearts of men, he would direct their lives according to those principles of love and righteousness which govern the saints and angels in heaven, and which, if universally obeyed, would make a heaven of earth.[1]

THE KING. **Is like unto a certain king.** Representing God the Father, the King of saints, who forms the kingdom, makes its laws, governs it, defends it, all for the good of the subjects, in whose prosperity and happiness and noble living is found the king's glory. He is the source of all the blessings offered to men in the Gospel. He was the king the Jewish leaders professed to serve, and of whose kingdom they felt themselves to be members.

THE MARRIAGE FEAST. **Which made a marriage,** *i. e.*, marriage feast. The word in Greek is in the plural, to express "the several parts or stages" of the festival. "Compare our word *nuptials*."[2] For the wedding festivities in the East are often protracted for several days, sometimes for an entire week or more. "Only two regular meals are ordinarily partaken of in Eastern lands. A lighter repast, consisting generally of bread, olives, milk, and fruits, forms the breakfast. But all entertainments, whether public or private, on a larger or smaller scale, were and are confined to the second meal, shortly before or after sunset, called, indifferently, dinner or supper."[3]

This feast represents all the blessings which God has provided in his Gospel, enjoyed in large measure here, and perfected in heaven (see Isai. 25: 6; 55: 1–3).

(1) The emphasis is on the marriage, the union between Christ and his people. It is the highest ideal of love and friendship. It expresses intimate fellowship with God, the mutual love and delight in one another, the protecting care on the one hand and perfect trust on the other, the unity of purpose, of character, of hope, the abiding forever in one perfect home, all of which belong to the union of Christ with believers (Isai. 61: 10; 62: 5; Hos. 2: 19; Matt. 9: 15; John 3: 29; Eph. 5: 31, 32).

(2) The kingdom of heaven is like a feast

[1] See *The Kingdom* by Geo. D. Boardman, D. D.
The kingdom of heaven is "the fellowship of souls, divine and human, of which the law and life are love, wherein the Fatherhood of God and the brotherhood of man, as both are embodied in Jesus the Christ, are recognized and realized." Stead, *The Kingdom of God*, p. 60. See Prof. Shailer Mathews, *Social Teaching of Jesus*, p. 54.

[2] Dr. Broadus.

[3] Canon Tristram.

3 And [m] sent forth his servants to call them that were bidden to the wedding: marriage feast: and they would not come.

4 [n] Again he sent forth other servants, saying, Tell them which that are bidden, Behold, I have prepared made ready my [o] dinner: [p] my oxen and and my fatlings are killed, and all things are ready: come unto to the marriage feast.

m Cp. Esth. 6. 14 & Prov. 9. 3, 5. *n* ch. 21. 36. *o* Luke 11. 38. John 21. 12, 15 (Gk.). *p* Prov. 9. 2.

because it provides for the satisfaction of every want, without cloying.[1]

(3) In great abundance: —

"Enough for each, enough for all, enough for evermore."

(4) Joyous. An infinite variety of delights. "Eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither have entered into the heart of man, the things which God hath prepared for them that love him" (1 Cor. 2: 9). "Joy unspeakable and full of glory." It shows that the true life is not all "a grinding at the mill," a time of toil and sacrifice, but also of spiritual refreshments, of joys unspeakable, of exquisite satisfaction and rest.

(5) Social. The feast shall be enjoyed with saints and angels, in the presence of God and his Son.

"They eat and drink, and in communion sweet quaff immortality and joy."

"The feast of reason and the flow of soul."

(6) Its blessings are for all. No one suffers hunger in the kingdom of God. Every cup is full to the brim and overflowing. "He bade many."

(7) It is eternal.

(8) It strengthens each guest for his work, for whatever God has for him to do.

(9) Some of the things provided for the guests at this feast are forgiveness of sin, new hearts and right spirits, the gift of the Holy Spirit, the abiding presence of Jesus, the care and love and promises of God, new revelations of truth, great opportunities of usefulness, eternal life.

The Bridegroom and the Bride. **For his son.** Jesus the Christ who loves the bride, his church, woos her, makes her his own, takes her to his home to abide in unspeakable love and joy forever. He is our soul's ideal, and never disappoints us. He has in the highest spiritual sense all that can be desired, — rank, wealth, home, resources, character, love, usefulness, attractiveness.

"The church as an ideal whole is the bride; the individual believers are the true guests."[2] We have in Rev. 21 and 22 a most delightful picture of the "Lamb's wife," — "a bride adorned for her husband," inconceivably beautiful, like "gold, as it were transparent glass," shining with the light of God, pure as crystal, with twelve manner of fruits, and useful for the healing of the nations. "This conception is essentially the same which we have in the Song of Solomon, and which appears in various forms throughout the Old Testament prophets and the New Testament writers — the church washed from her sins, clothed in white, her loving heart given in virgin simplicity and purity to her glorious Husband, her Jesus — at once Lover, Lord, and King."[3]

The Invitation. 3. **And sent forth his servants to call them that were bidden.** Literally, "to call the called," to summon those who had previously been invited. It is still customary in the East not only to give an invitation some time beforehand, but to send round servants at the proper time to inform the invited guests that all things are ready.[4] This notification was easy because "the guests were close together in an Eastern city," and necessary, because "they were not generally supplied with timepieces."[5] "The notification is not customary among common people; but in Lebanon it still prevails. If a Sheik, Beg, or Emir invites, he always sends a servant to call you at the proper time."[6] **And they would not come.** They could, but they did not wish to come, as is clearly expressed in the Greek. They did not like the king or his son. They were traitors at heart.

4. **Again, he sent forth other servants,** who were "not merely to invite to, but to commend the feast, with a view to create a desire."[7] **Behold, I have prepared my dinner** (ἄριστον), at first used for breakfast, but later for "dinner to which people are invited."[8] **My oxen** (beeves) **and my fatlings.** Smaller animals, as lambs, calves, specially fed for the occasion. **All things are ready: come.** There was no threatening, but only a loving, earnest invitation, as if they might have misunderstood the first invitation, or not realized its value.

The Servants who first invited represented all God's inspired messengers, Moses, and the prophets, and John the Baptist. The "other servants" were Christ himself as a prophet, and his apostles.

[1] See Trench's *Poems*, "The Monk and the Bird."
[2] Prof. Riddle. [3] Prof. Cowles. [4] Kitto.
[5] Dr. Broadus. [6] Wm. M. Thomson. [7] Prof. A. B. Bruce.
[8] Prof. Thayer, *N. T. Lexicon.*

5 But they *q* made light of *it*, and went their ways, one to his own farm, another to his merchandise:

6 And the remnant took and rest laid hold on his servants, and *r* entreated *them* spitefully, and *s* slew *them*. killed them.

7 But when the king heard *thereof*, he was wroth: and he sent forth his armies, and *t* destroyed those murderers, and burned up their city.

8 Then saith he to his servants, The wedding is ready, but they which that were bidden were not *u* worthy.

q Cp. Heb. 2. 3. *r* Luke 18. 32. Acts 14. 5. 1 Thess. 2. 2. *s* See ch. 21. 35. *t* ch. 21. 41. Luke 19. 27. *u* ch. 10. 11. Acts 13. 46. Rev. 3. 4. Cp. Luke 20. 35.

THE WEDDING FEAST WAS READY. The fulness of the time had come. The preparations were complete. Everything was prepared for the redemption of man, — heaven, love, the atonement, the strongest motives, the power of the Holy Spirit. The world was in the best condition for the coming of Christ. Never before or since has there been so fitting a time, — one government, one language, peace, roads, synagogues of the Jews everywhere. The slaying of the animals is an allusion to sacrifice. Only when the Lamb was slain on Calvary were all things ready for the marriage. The long preparations for the Gospel were completed; the forerunner had done his work; Jesus himself had come from heaven, and had taught the Jews the divine message, and even now he was uttering his last words. Within three days he would consummate his atonement on the cross. The time had come when the Jews must decide whether they would accept the Messiah or not.

THE INVITATION REFUSED, in two ways, (1) by neglect, and (2) by active opposition.

5. **But they made light of it** (ἀμελήσαντες). The word does not express jeering, or derision, but indifference. They took no notice of it. All was as nothing compared with their farm and merchandise, — to enjoy what they had and to acquire more. Such indifference to a feast given by an earthly king is almost unknown, but it was a true picture of the Jews in Christ's day. The leading Jews had very much at stake, — their country, their holy city, their temple, their synagogues, their rank and wealth, their leadership of the people. They were so busy with these, they were so afraid they would lose them if they accepted the humble Nazarene as their teacher and obeyed his precepts, that they were unwilling even to consider his claims.

It is also a true picture of the indifference of many modern people to religion, to the spiritual blessings which God offers them in the Gospel.[1] Bunyan tells how Christian in his journey saw a man busily employed raking together bits of hay, wood, and stubble, while over him stood a shining angel, holding above his head a crown of light.

> "A finger's breadth at hand may mar
> A world of light in heaven afar;
> A mote eclipse a glorious star."

6. **And the remnant, the rest, took (seized) his servants, and entreated them spitefully.** Insulted them, persecuted them. **And slew them.** As the Jewish nation had done to many a prophet in their past history, and as they were soon to do again to the preachers of the Gospel. Active opposition to the Gospel has often arisen when it has come in conflict with the evils of the world. Persecution, hatred, reviling, have often been the portion of God's people, even from those who have professed to be his servants.

THE RESULT OF THE REFUSAL. 7. **The king . . . was wroth.** Not in a passion, but with an abiding indignation against wrong, against those who not only despised every effort to make them better, but prevented others from coming into the kingdom. It is the feeling that demands punishment. **He sent forth his armies.** Better, troops, soldiers. Those persons and those forces, whether consciously or unconsciously, whether animate or inanimate, which accomplish God's purposes of judgment. They may be angels, or earthquakes, or remorse of conscience, or the literal armies of the nations. Without doubt, here he refers to the Roman armies under Titus, which destroyed Jerusalem. "The angels which ruined the Jews were War, Famine, and Pestilence." We may add the selfish passions which prevented them from uniting against Titus. **And destroyed those murderers, and burned up their city.** This took place literally forty years later, when Jerusalem was destroyed, the people were slain by millions, and the nation destroyed. There has been no Jewish nation since. All this might have been avoided if the nation had accepted Jesus as the Messiah.

This is a type of the destruction of the incorrigibly wicked, who refuse all God's invitations to repent and come into the kingdom of heaven.

THE TRANSFERRED INVITATION. 8. **They**

[1] Compare people who are color-blind, or deaf to certain sounds.

9 Go ye therefore unto the [into] partings of the highways, and as many as ye shall find, bid to the marriage [feast].

10 [So, And] those servants went out into the highways, and [w] gathered together all as many as they found, both bad and good: and the wedding was [furnished, filled] with guests.

11 ¶ [And, But] when the king came in to [see, behold] the guests, he saw there [x] a man which had not on a [wedding garment: wedding-garment:]

v Ezek. 21. 21. Obad. 14. *w* See ch. 13. 47. *x* Cp. Rev. 19. 8 & 22. 14.

which were bidden were not worthy. As they proved themselves by rejecting the invitation. The Jews had been trained and guided by God for the very purpose of bringing in the kingdom of God through the Messiah, and when the time came, they refused him. A similar result often follows from those who are organized to do some special work.

9. **Go ye therefore into the highways.** Or, "the partings of the highways," the cross-roads, the places where great numbers meet, "the broad, well-trodden ways of the world."

10. **Gathered together all . . . both bad and good.** There is no condition of coming to Christ, but *just to come*. The bad are invited that they may be made good (1 Cor. 6: 9–11); the good that they may be made better, enjoy higher privileges, and enter into wider usefulness. "He loved her foul that he might make her fair."[1] It is still the business of all Christians to go out into the highways and hedges and invite all, both good and bad, to come to the Gospel feast. The worse men are, the more degraded and sinful, the fewer their opportunities, the more they are opposed to good, so much the more do they need the invitations of the Gospel. **The wedding was furnished with guests.** Christ's purposes and plans shall not fail. Here we have the assurance of the success of the Gospel.

PRACTICAL. (1) The kingdom of God was transferred from the Jewish nation to the Gentiles. The Messianic kingdom is to-day the mightiest power on earth. And the Jews, who might have been kings and princes in this spiritual kingdom, shut themselves out. But the invitation returns to them, and now they are again invited to come.

(2) This is but one example of what must always take place. If those who are appointed to do a work refuse to do it, or neglect it, their opportunity and place must be taken away from them and given to others.

(3) Great hope is let down from heaven to the poorest, to those in the hardest and most unfortunate circumstances. Nothing outward can prevent you from being saints and heroes, and few hindrances can prevent fair worldly success. History is as full as the sky is of stars, of saints, heroes, authors, business men, presidents, leaders in every department, who came up from circumstances and families from which nothing could naturally be expected. Many a man is a harp with many a broken string, imperfect, defective; but if he will yield to the influences of the Holy Spirit, God can bring forth heavenly music from his soul. From an outcast of the highways, he can become a guest at the marriage feast of the Lamb.

THE WEDDING GARMENT. 11. **The king . . . saw there a man which had not**[2] **on a wedding garment.** Either (1) a dress of his own suitable for the royal wedding occasion, just as now on dress occasions, and especially in royal receptions, a special dress is required, and those who do not come thus dressed are excluded; or (2) more probably a garment to be put over the usual dress, furnished by the king himself to all the guests on their arrival at the palace, before they entered the halls of the feast. Chardin mentions the case of a vizier who put on a royal robe of a former king instead of the one sent by the officer of the reigning king, and it cost him his life. "At the royal marriage of Sultan Mahmoud, a few years ago, every guest invited to the wedding had made expressly for him, at the expense of the Sultan, a wedding garment. No one, however dignified his station, was permitted to enter into the presence chamber of that sovereign without a change of raiment. This was formerly the universal custom in the East. But inasmuch as these garments were very costly, and some of the guests might plead poverty, and thus appear unclad in the guest chamber of the king, the cost was defrayed at the Sultan Mahmoud's expense. To each guest was presented a suit of wedding garments. Had any, therefore, appeared before this absolute sovereign without the wedding garment, the Sultan would have deemed his dignity insulted, and his munificent gifts despised. It would be an avowal

[1] Augustine.

[2] See an interesting note on the use here of the Greek negative μὴ instead of οὐκ, in Prof. Vincent's *Word Studies*.

12 And he saith unto him, [y] Friend, how camest thou in hither not having a wedding garment? And he was speechless.

13 Then said the king to the servants, Bind him hand and foot, and take him away, and [z] cast him out into the outer darkness; there shall be the weeping and gnashing of teeth.

14 For many are [a] called, but few are chosen.

15 ¶ [b] Then went the Phăr'ĭ-sees, and took counsel how they [c] might entangle him in *his* talk.

y ch. 20. 13 & 26. 50. *z* See ch. 8. 12. *a* Rev. 17. 14. *b* For vers. 15–32, see Mark 12. 13–27 & Luke 20. 20–38. *c* Cp. Ecclus. 27. 23 & Luke 11. 54.

that he denied his authority and despised his power." [1]

12. **How camest thou**, what excuse have you? **And he was speechless**, ἐφιμώθη, *he was muzzled*, from φιμός, *a muzzle*, or gag. The same word is used in Mark (4: 39), where Jesus says to the stormy sea, "Peace, *be still*." The guest's consciousness of wrong stopped every flow of excuse. He had no good reason, and he knew it.

13. **The servants.** Attendants. **Bind him hand and foot.** This points to the impossibility of escaping the purposed punishment.[2] **Outer darkness.** The darkness outside the royal banqueting house, which was brilliantly illuminated. His chagrin, shame, and anguish are expressed by the outward signs of **weeping and gnashing of teeth.** This was the actual result to the Jews who refused the holiness which Christ brought to them.

14. **Many are called.** Invited with offers of the freest grace, most earnestly, most lovingly, most persuasively. **But few are chosen.** Few accept and come into the chosen number who partake of the feast. Only a few of the Jews became Christians. It is said that not one of the Christians perished at the destruction of Jerusalem. Jesus does not say that this will always be so. It was then; it has been so since.

PRACTICAL. (1) The wedding garment represents the new spiritual nature, the Christian graces, and all which the Holy Spirit imparts to those who believe in Christ, — the gifts and the fruits of the spirit. "The garment must, surely, from the very nature of the image, have been intended to signify something public and visible. I would say, then, that by this remarkable symbol our Lord did not intend merely the inward principle of faith; for apparel is, of all things, the most manifest and visible, and the wedding apparel is especially the apparel of joy. This festal garment of heaven, then, seems to be no other than that celestial temper which manifests itself by the infallible indications of a holy joy; holy happiness, public and expressed, inward, spiritual happiness, developed by the presence of God, and the consciousness of heaven, into visible manifestation, — this is the wedding garment which Christ beholds and approves in the saved." [3] More than this: It consists in all the virtues of a renewed heart, shining through every act, manifested in all holy living. "Graces are thus a beautiful ornament to the soul, as garments are to the body." [4]

(2) The wedding garment is offered to all, so that all who will can have it freely.

(3) The wedding garment is of such a nature that it is absolutely necessary to the partaking of the feast of good things offered by the Gospel.

(4) There is no good reason for refusing this divine gift.

(5) If we refuse to accept it, we thereby shut ourselves away from the feast into outer darkness.

VII. A QUESTION BY THE HERODIANS CONCERNING TAXES, vers. 15–22.

PARALLELS. Mark 12: 13–17; Luke 20: 20–26.

15. Jesus had held up three mirrors before the rulers in the three foregoing parables, and they resented the image they presented of their souls. But there was nothing they could say in reply. The likenesses were too correct. Now they try another plan. The Pharisees consulted together **how they might entangle him in his talk.** They would compel him to say something that would form a charge against him, and enable them to try and to condemn him to death. But in every case the question was the means of bringing some truth into a clearer light. Opposition, the most bitter and malicious, was used by Jesus like the thin filament in the electric lamp by which the hitherto unseen current is made to give forth a dazzling light. So it has ever been with the great attacks upon the Bible and the doctrines of the Gospel. Every attack has been the occasion of purer truth and stronger light.

[1] See *Suggestive Illustrations on Matthew*, and Rosenmuller's *Alte und Neue Morgenl.*, vol. v. p. 76.

[2] Prof. Riddle. [3] W. Archer Butler.

[4] See Carlyle's *Sartor Resartus*.

16 And they (sent out unto / send to) him *d* their disciples, with *e* the Hĕ-rō′dĭ-ans, saying, Master, *f* we know that thou art true, and teachest the *g* way of God in truth, (neither / and) carest (thou / not) for any (man's / one's) for *h* thou regardest not the person of men.

17 Tell us therefore, What thinkest thou? Is it lawful to give *i* tribute unto *j* Çæ′sar, or not?

18 But Jē′sus perceived their wickedness, and said, Why *k* tempt ye me, (ye / ye) hypocrites?

19 Shew me the tribute money. And they brought unto him a penny.

20 And he saith unto them, Whose (is / is) this image and superscription?

21 They say unto him, Çæ′sar's. Then saith he unto them, *l* Render therefore unto Çæ′sar the things (which / that) are Çæ′sar's; and unto God the things that are God's.

d Mark 2. 18. *e* Mark 3. 6. Cp. Mark 12. 13. *f* Cp. John 3. 2. *g* Acts 18. 26. Cp. Acts 13. 10. *h* See Acts 10. 34. *i* ch. 17. 25. *j* Luke 2. 1 & 3. 1. *k* See [John 8. 6]. *l* Rom. 13. 7.

16. **And they sent out unto him their disciples**, some of their shrewdest men, **with the Herodians**. "Adherents of the Herods, who owed what power they possessed to the Roman government." [1] "They vied with the Sadducees in skepticism, and with the Greeks in licentiousness, pandered to the vice and cruelty of the Herods, and truckled to the Romans." [2] These emissaries were chosen because they occupied different sides of the question proposed. They would be sharp to see the vulnerable points in Jesus' answer, each for his own view. **Master, we know thou art true**, so that you will speak the truth without fear or favor. **For thou teachest the way of God in truth**, you can give a divine answer to our question, one of absolute truth. Thus "they feigned themselves to be righteous" (Luke), to be sincere inquirers after the path of duty. **Regardest not the person of men.** You speak the truth whether rulers, governors, or emperors are pleased with it or not; you are brave and true.

17. **Is it lawful to give tribute unto Cæsar, or not?** Give us a plain answer, yes, or no. "The word rendered *tribute* (κῆνσος) is properly the Roman word *census*, which we too have adopted into our own language, though with a different application from what it bore among the Jews. It denoted, as used by the Jews, *the annual poll tax which was levied on the people for the treasury of the Roman emperor*. The publicans collected it, and were obliged to transmit to the Roman treasury as much as accorded with *the official census of the population*. Hence the designation of the tax. It was of the value of a day's wages," [3] that is, a denarius, or silver penny.

The Dilemma. They expected an answer of yes or no. No matter which side Jesus took, it seemed impossible for him not to seriously damage his cause. If he decided for either party, the other would be his enemy. He was sailing between Scylla and Charybdis. If he said it was

A silver penny, or Denarius of Tiberius.

not right to pay taxes, he would be in collision with the whole Roman power, which would regard and treat him as a criminal. His career would be ended. If he said it was lawful for the Jews, the great mass of the people would be against him, and he would lose his hold upon them; for they hated the Roman government, and one of the first and greatest things they expected of the Messiah was deliverance from this subjection to a foreign power.[4]

18. **Why tempt ye me, ye hypocrites**, making your base designs under the guise of seekers after truth.

19. **Show me the tribute money.** Lit., the coin of the census, the coin in which the poll tax is paid. **And they brought unto him a penny**, a denarius, a silver coin worth 15 to 17 cents.

20. **Whose is this image.** The emperor issuing the coin usually had his image stamped upon it; as is common in modern times. **And superscription**, the inscription upon the coin, the name and titles of the emperor.

21. **They say unto him.** Cæsar's (pronounced by Romans and Greeks, Kaizar, same as the German Kaiser and Russian Czar). **Render**

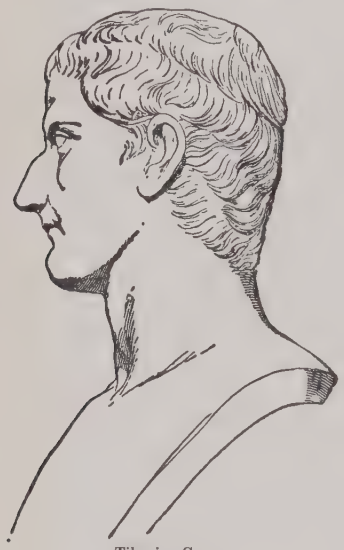
[1] Prof. Gould, *Int. Crit. Com.*
[2] *Oxford Bible Helps*, p. 232.
[3] Morison.
[4] "The taxes were a constant cause of revolt." See Josephus, *Antiquities*, xviii. 1 : 1–6 : xx. 5 : 2.

22 When And when they had heard *these words,* it, they marvelled, and [m] left him, and went their way.

23 ¶ The same On that day there came to him the [n] Săd'du-çees, [o] which say that there is no resurrection: and they asked him,

m Mark 12. 12. *n* ver. 34. ch. 3. 7 & 16. 1. Acts 4. 1 & 5. 17 & 23. 6. *o* Acts 23. 8. Cp. Acts 4. 2.

therefore unto Cæsar the things which are Cæsar's ; and unto God the things that are God's. "The image and superscription on the coin implied the sovereignty of Cæsar. The Jews,



Tiberius Cæsar.

by using the coins, in so far were served by the Roman government. They therefore owed it some service in return. This service was the payment of taxes."[1] They received very much more than this from the Roman government, in protection, in roads, etc. And even if they received them under protest, yet so long as they used these advantages, they should pay their part of the expense. The payment did not endorse the right of the government, but only the honesty of those who took benefits from it. "The things that are Cæsar's" included "not only the taxes, but everything to which Cæsar was entitled as a legitimate ruler." Christ's word meant, Fulfil your obligations to the state, since your very coins show that you have such obligations; do your duty in this sphere. But God's image is stamped on your souls. You belong to God. You have duties of love and trust and obedience to him. Fulfil those duties as faithfully as you should those to an earthly ruler. Bring your whole life under the sway of conscience and righteousness.

NOTE 1. Edersheim well says that this answer was not an evasion of the question, but the laying down of the great principle underlying the question. "It was an answer not only most truthful, but of marvellous beauty and depth. It elevated the controversy into quite another sphere, where there was no conflict between what was due to God and to man, — indeed, no conflict at all, but divine harmony and peace."

NOTE 2. "At the same time Christ affords both the ground and the limitation of this obedience. The powers that be are ordained of God, but when Cæsar requires what God forbids we are to disobey. For illustration of the duty of obedience to human law, see Rom. 13: 1–7; 1 Cor. 7: 21–24; Eph. 6: 5–8; Col. 3: 22–25; 1 Pet. 2: 13–17. For illustration of the duty of disobedience, under the higher law of allegiance to God, see Dan. 3: 18; 6: 10; Acts 4: 19; 5: 29."[2] "Man is the coinage and bears the image of God (Gen. 1: 27); and this image is not lost by the fall (Gen. 9: 6; Acts 17: 29; James 3: 9). We owe, then, ourselves to God; and this solemn duty is implied, of giving ourselves to him, with all that we have and are."[3]

VIII. A QUESTION BY THE SADDUCEES CONCERNING THE RESURRECTION, vers. 23–33.

PARALLELS. Mark 12: 18–27; Luke 20: 27–39.

23. **The same day came to him the Sadducees**, a smaller sect than the Pharisees, but including many of the highest and wealthiest of the people. They were the opposite of the Pharisees in many respects. They **say that there is no resurrection** of the dead, no angel or spirit, or *future life.* (Mark 12: 18; Acts 23: 8,) It was natural that these should ask puzzling questions concerning the future life, because they were natural puzzles in connection with their real belief. It was an attack on the belief of the Pharisees, and still more was it an attack upon Jesus himself, by placing his teachings in an absurd and ridiculous light, and thus discrediting him in

[1] Prof. Shailer Mathews, *The Social Teaching of Jesus,* pp. 118–120.

[2] Abbott.

[3] Dean Alford.

24 Saying, saying, Master, Mō'şeş said, *p* If a man die, having no children, his brother
shall marry his wife, and raise up seed unto his brother.
25 Now there were with us seven brethren: and the first when he had married
a wife, and deceased, and having no issue, seed left his wife unto his brother;
26 Likewise in like manner the second also, and the third, unto the seventh.
27 And last of after them all the woman died. also.
28 Therefore in the resurrection In the resurrection therefore whose wife shall she be of the seven? for they all had her.
29 But Jē'şus answered and said unto them, Ye do err, *q* not knowing the
scriptures, nor *r* the power of God.
30 For in the resurrection they neither *s* marry, nor *s* are given in marriage,
but are as the angels of God in heaven.
31 But as touching the resurrection of the dead, *t* have ye not read that which
was spoken unto you by God, saying,
32 "I am the God of Ā'brā-hăm, and the God of Ī'şaac, and the God of Jā'cob?
God is not the God *the God* of the dead, but of the living.

p Cp. Deut. 25. 5. *q* John 20. 9. *r* 1 Cor. 14. *s* ch. 24. 38. Luke 17. 27. *t* See ch. 21. 16. *u* Acts 7. 32. Cited from Ex. 3. 6.

the eyes of the people. It is one of the commonest modes of infidel attack in the present day. If there was no resurrection, then Jesus' teachings were false. His promise that he should rise again must fail, and with it his claim to be the Messiah and the Son of God, his promised kingdom, all the rewards he had promised to his disciples. His whole mission would be a failure.

24. **Master, Moses said, If a man die, having no children**, etc. The case comes under the law of Levirate marriage given in Deut. 25 : 5–10. The object of the law was to prevent the extinction of a family. "(1) It was limited to the case where the deceased left no male issue; (2) even then it was only put in force when the two brothers were dwelling on the same family estate."[1] This institution prevailed in many other nations besides the Hebrews.

25–27. **There were with us seven brethren**, and the wife of the first, according to this law, became the wife of each one in succession.

28. Based on this occurrence, stated as a fact, came the question, **In the resurrection whose wife shall she be of the seven?** "Crude as the question may seem, it must have offered serious difficulties to the Pharisees, who held materialistic views as to the future state."[2] "The law provides for these successive marriages . . . which the resurrection would make simultaneous"[3] and therefore contrary to the divine law.

29. **Ye do err, not knowing the scriptures**, as shown in vers. 31, 32. They fail to see how the "doctrine of the resurrection and a future life underlies many a scriptural utterance." **Nor the power of God**, who is able to raise the dead, and who transforms the material body into a glorious spiritual body, in which earthly marriage has no possibility or place. As soon as they get above the material into the spiritual their difficulty vanishes.

30. In that state human beings shall be **as the angels of God in heaven**. There will be no less love, no less intimate union of soul with soul, no less delight in one another, but it will not take the form of marriage. The spiritual is the immortal.

31. **As touching the resurrection of the dead**, as bearing upon the fact of the resurrection and therefore of the future life. **Have ye not read** (in Ex. 3 : 6) **that which was spoken unto you by God**. These were the direct words of God to Moses at the burning bush. "The expression 'spoken *unto you* by God' is noticeable, as implying that whatever God is saying in the Scriptures he is saying unto all and each. His voice reaches down through all ages, and carries its message of mercy to all who have ears to hear and minds to apprehend."[4] "The Sadducees based their denial of the resurrection on the alleged silence of Scripture, and on the incredibility of existence after the death of the body (Josephus, *Wars of the Jews*, ii. : 8 : 14). Christ demolishes their premises by showing that the Scripture is not silent, but teaches the reality of existence after death."[5]

32. **I am the God of Abraham**, etc. This is the quotation. Then Jesus proceeds to state the necessary inference, — **God is not the God of the**

[1] Prof. Driver, *Int. Crit. Com.* on Deut.
[2] Prof. H. B. Swete on Mark.
[3] Prof. Gould, *Int. Crit. Com.* on Mark.
[4] Morison.
[5] Prof. A. Plummer, *Int. Crit. Com.* on Luke.

33 And when the multitude (multitudes) heard *this*, (it,) [v] they were astonished at his doctrine (teaching).
34 ¶ [w] But when the Phăr'ĭ-sees, (when they had) heard that he had put [x] the Săd'du-çees to silence, they were gathered themselves together.
35 [y] Then (And) one of them, *which was* [z] a lawyer, asked *him a question*, (him a question,) [a] tempting him, and saying,

36 Master, which is (is) the great commandment in the law?
37 Je'sus (And he) said unto him, [b] Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind.

v See ch. 7. 28. *w* For vers. 34–40, see Mark 12. 28–33. *x* ver. 23. *y* Cp. Luke 10. 25–28. *z* See Luke 7. 30. *a* ver. 18. *b* Luke 10. 27. Cited from Deut. 6. 5.

dead, but of the living. Those who are nonexistent cannot have a God, or sustain any relation to God. Therefore if God could say that he was still the God of the patriarchs, centuries after they had died from the earth, those patriarchs must be living in his sight. This proves existence in a future life, and consequently of the resurrection as the means to immortal life. The resurrection means the continued existence beyond death, the bringing into conscious living those who have died on earth.

33. **The multitude . . . were astonished** (ἐξεπλήσσοντο), a very strong word, meaning *to strike out of one's senses*, as by a blow, or sudden shock. So we say "struck dumb with astonishment."

IX. A QUESTION BY A SCRIBE OF THE PHARISEES CONCERNING THE GREATEST COMMANDMENT, vers. 34–40.

PARALLEL. Mark 12: 28–34.

34. **When the Pharisees had heard** that he had put the Sadducees to silence (ἐφίμωσε), had *muzzled* the Sadducees, as in verse 12, where the man without a wedding garment was *muzzled*, translated, "was speechless." Jesus had defeated both delegations, openly before the people. Something must be done. **Therefore they were gathered together**, discussing their defeat and the wise answers Jesus had given. They were puzzled as to what to do next, and trying to find some new device.

35. **Then one of them.** A Pharisee, who had listened to the discussions of Jesus (Mark 12: 28). **A lawyer.** A scribe, one of the men learned in the Jewish law, who copied, preserved, interpreted, and taught the Jewish Scriptures. **Asked him a question.** Probably one frequently discussed. **Tempting him**, testing him to see what kind of an answer the wise teacher would give to one of the stock questions which divided the Jewish teachers into rival schools. Mr. Glover thinks that the Pharisees were tempting Jesus through this pure and undesigning scribe. "It is still the practice of designing men to get honest men to ask the questions and to march in front of their movement. And it still often happens that honest men, suspecting none of subtlety, do the work of those whom they would despise if they knew them." The result would be that there would be a division among the disciples of Jesus.

36. **Which is the great commandment in the law?** *Which* is not the common relative pronoun; but ποία, "what kind of," "what by nature, by its decisive and noble quality," is the great commandment, the one that stands first in importance? Is it a ceremonial, or a moral precept? Is it a duty to God, or to man? "What kind of commandment must it be to constitute it a great one? Not, which commandment is greatest as compared with the others? The scribes declared that there were 248 affirmative precepts, as many as the members of the human body; and 365 negative precepts, as many as the days in the year; the total being 613, the number of letters in the Decalogue. Of these they called some *light* and some *heavy*. Some thought that the law about the fringes on the garments was the greatest; some that the omission of washings was as bad as homicide; some that the third commandment was the greatest. It was in view of this kind of distinction that the scribe asked the question; not as desiring a declaration as to which commandment was greatest, but as wanting to know the *principle* upon which a commandment was to be regarded as a *great* commandment."[1]

37. **Jesus said unto him**, quoting, with the addition reported by Mark, from Deut. 6: 4, 5, the very words which "every devout Jew recited twice every day; and the Jews do it to this day,"[2] and which they inscribed on the parchment enclosed in their phylacteries, and wore on their foreheads and arms during prayer. It was called the Shema (Hebrew for *Hear*, the first word of the quotation). "To say the Shema was a passport into Paradise for any child of Abraham."[3]

[1] Prof. M. R. Vincent, *Word Studies.* [2] David Brown, D. D. [3] Ellicott.

38 This is the first great and great first commandment.
39 And [c] the a second [is] like unto it, unto it is this, [d] Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself.
40 [e] On these two commandments [f] hang all the hangeth the whole law, and the prophets.

c Cp. 1 John 4. 21. *d* Cited from Lev. 19. 18. See ch. 19. 19. *e* Cp. Rom. 13. 8, 10. *f* ch. 7. 12. Cp. Gal 5. 14.

Thus Jesus' answer from their own Bible, in words they regarded as supremely sacred, led him out safely from the snares the Pharisees had set for him. The first sentence in Mark's report, as in Deuteronomy, is *Hear*, O Israel : the Lord *our God is one Lord*. This describes and designates the God we are to love supremely. Jehovah, the God of Israel, is the one absolute, self-existent, eternal God, and he alone. He is the Creator, Ruler, Preserver, Guide, Saviour, Father, Source of all good. One of the best services science has done for religion is the completeness of the proof that there is but one God, by proving the unity of material, of force, of government throughout the known universe. The unity of moral law is another unassailable proof.

No Unitarian can insist upon the absolute unity of God with more earnestness and emphasis than do the Trinitarians. We believe in ONE God, and only one. It would be a terrible thing if there were conflicting deities, some having one dominion, and others another. There would be no peace, no safety, no exaltation of soul, no assurance of hope, no eternal heaven. **Thou shalt love the Lord thy God.** Love is an *all-inclusive* affection, embracing not only every other affection proper to its object, but all that is proper to be *done* to its object ; for as love spontaneously seeks to please its object, so, in the case of men to God, it is the native wellspring of a voluntary obedience. It is, besides, the most *personal* of all affections. One may fear an *event*, one may hope for an *event*, one may rejoice in an *event ;* but one can love only a *person*. It is the *tenderest*, the most *unselfish*, the most *divine*, of all affections. Such, then, is the affection in which the essence of the divine law is declared to consist. **With,** or from, **all thy heart,** the general word for the inner man. It is the seat of the desires, passions, affections, emotions. **With all thy soul.** The life principle, the centre of will and personality. **With all thy mind.** It is to be an intelligent love, from free choice under the direction of the reason and the judgment. Mark adds from Deuteronomy, *with all thy might*, "representing the outgoings and energies of all the powers."

38. **This is the first and great commandment.** It is the sum of the first table of the law. It stands supremely first. It is the fountain and source of all virtue.

REASONS FOR LOVING GOD SUPREMELY. (1) He is supremely good ; he is the sum of all good. He that loves God loves all that is good, and hates all that is evil. (2) He is not only good, but lovable. His goodness is attractive ; it is worthy of love. (3) All we have and are we owe to him ; and the only way in which we can make any return is to love him and obey him in love. That is all that is ours to give ; to withhold it is unutterably mean. (4) "The best thing in man is love, and God wants the best." (5) Such love not only honors God, but elevates man. Love is the most ennobling act of the soul ; and the nobler and higher the object and the more intense the love, so much the more is the one who thus loves ennobled, purified, enlarged, exalted in nature. (6) In him are found all that ought to move the highest affections of men.[1]

39. **The second,** better "a second," as in R. V. There is no article before "second" in the Greek, as there is before "first" above in verse 38. **Is like unto it.** Because it is like the first, an embodiment of love ; it is the sum of the second table of the law ; it is almost a twin commandment with it ; for love to God will certainly manifest itself in love to man, his child and our brother. "Our Lord wished to show that this first commandment did not stand at the head of a long list of heterogeneous commands among which it was simply *primus inter pares* (first among equals), but that it was one of two homogeneous commands which exhausted the idea of righteousness."[2] **Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself.** That is the measure of our love to our neighbor, and expresses the kind and quality of our love as expressed in action. Many difficult practical questions, as to how we should treat our neighbor, are solved by the application of this measure and test. This love is the principle in the heart from which flows the Golden Rule in practice, "Therefore all things whatsoever ye would that men should do to you, do ye even so to them" (Matt. 7 : 12). He that possesses a heart of love, loving his neighbor as himself, will necessarily obey the second table of the law ; for obedience to these laws is the natural fruit of such love. The heart of love is a foun-

[1] See Miss Havergal's *Kept for the Master's Use*, "Our love kept for Jesus," especially its quotation from a poem.

[2] *Int. Crit. Com.* on Mark.

41 *g* While / Now while the Phăr'ī-sees *h* were gathered together, Jē'şus asked them a question,

42 Saying, / saying, What think ye of *i* the Chrīst? whose son is he? They say unto him, *The son* of Dā'vid.

43 He saith unto them, How then doth Dā'vid *j* in the spirit / the Spirit call him Lord, saying,

44 *k* The Lord said unto my Lord, Sit thou on my right hand, till / Till I make / put thine enemies thy footstool? / underneath thy feet?

45 If Dā'vid then call / calleth him Lord, *l* how is he his son?

g For vers. 41–45, see Mark 12. 35–37 & Luke 20. 41–44. *h* ver. 34. *i* See ch. 1. 1, 17. *j* Rev. 1. 10 & 4. 2. Cp. 2 Sam. 23. 2. *k* Acts 2. 34, 35. Heb. 1. 13. Cited from Ps. 110. 1. Cp. 1 Cor. 15. 25 & Heb. 10. 13. *l* Cp. Rom. 1. 3, 4.

tain of living waters, and the commandments are the channels through which the streams flow out. The commandments are the fences by the roadside which show love the way in which it should go.[1] The scribe, according to Mark, accepted this answer as true; and Jesus declared that he was not far from the kingdom of God.

PRACTICAL. Love to God and love to man are like two magnets placed in connection; each one makes the other stronger.

RESULTS. The fundamental truth shines out clear with the light of heaven.

In that shining we not only see our ideal, but we are convicted of sin and need by our consciousness of how far short we come of our duty. This leads us to turn to Christ, who will forgive us, and implant love in our hearts, and give us daily help to live the life of love.

X. JESUS IN RETURN ASKS THEM A QUESTION CONCERNING THE EXPECTED MESSIAH, vers. 41–46.

PARALLELS. Mark 12: 35–37; Luke 20: 41–44.

41. **The Pharisees were gathered together,** to consult what course to take next, as in ver. 34. **Jesus asked them a question.** "The question is undoubtedly a puzzling one for them: but it is no mere Scripture conundrum. The difficulty in which it lands them is one which, if only they would honestly face it, would be the means of removing the veil from their eyes and leading them, ere it is too late, to welcome the Son of David come in the name of the Lord to save them." "If they would honestly read that psalm, they would see that the Messiah when he comes must be not a mere earthly monarch, as David was, but a heavenly monarch." "If only they would take their ideas of the Christ from the Scriptures which were their boast, they could not fail to see him standing now before them."[2]

42. **What think ye of Christ?** Have you really thought thoroughly about your Messiah? Have you done all you could to know what he ought to be, in what way he should come, what kind of a king he was to be? They were blind guides, as he calls them in Matt. 23: 16. They would not see.

NOTE, this is the great question for every person. On the answer to it depends what Christ is to him, and his power in the church. "A small Christ, a feeble church." "The greater the Christ, the mightier the church to save the world."

Whose son is he? Their only answer must be that he was to be **the son of David,** that is, the descendant of David, "according to universal Jewish opinion and recognized Scripture teaching (comp. Matt. 9: 27; 12: 23; 15: 22; 20: 30; 21: 9, 15; John 7: 41 f.); in Mark and Luke our Lord refers to the fact that the scribes so taught."[3] This was the truth, but not the whole truth.

43. **How then doth David in spirit.** Mark says, "By the Holy Ghost," by inspiration of God. **Call him Lord,** quoting from Ps. 110: 1. "This psalm is oftener quoted in the New Testament as Messianic than is any other portion of the Old Testament."[3]

44. **The Lord** (Jehovah in the Hebrew) **said unto my Lord,** "to my sovereign Lord, the Messiah, the son of David." **Sit thou on my right hand,** as my co-regent. This verse is quoted in 1 Cor. 15: 25; Heb. 1: 13; 10: 12, 13, as applying to the Messiah, as was the universal Jewish opinion. "In later Jewish writings nearly every verse of it is quoted as referring to the Messiah."[4]

45. **If David then call him Lord, how is he his son?** There was only one answer: that in his human nature he was David's son, but as the Son of God he was his Lord. The Messiah was both.

[1] See Professor Drummond's *Greatest Thing in the World;* Leigh Hunt's *Poems,* "Abou Ben Adhem, may his tribe increase."

[2] Monro Gibson, D. D.

[3] Dr. Hovey, *Am. Com. on Matthew.*

[4] Perowne on *The Psalms,* 2: 291.

46 [m] And no man (one) was able to answer him a word, [n] neither durst any man (man) from that day forth ask him any more questions (questions).

m Cp. Luke 14. 6. *n* Mark 12. 34. Luke 20. 40.

46. **No man was able to answer him a word,** because they did not take the whole Scriptures, and learn all they said about the Messiah. They were convicted of ignorance. **Ask him any more questions.** This method of attack was given up as a failure. "But the common people heard him gladly" (Mark).

Thus Jesus not only met opposition wisely and unanswerably, but he caused it to bring out more clearly some great and needful truths. This is the wise use of all opposition. It has thus ever been. Every great attack upon the Bible has had this effect. The particles in the air which resist the sunlight make them more visible and useful. The storms blow away mists which had been mistaken for solid mountains, and reveal a wider and more beautiful world.

CHAPTER 23.

SECTION XIX.—THE LAST DAYS OF JESUS' PUBLIC MINISTRY (*continued*).

TUESDAY, APRIL 4. THE LAST DAY OF JESUS' PUBLIC TEACHING (*continued*).

For two chapters we have been considering what Jesus did on this great day. It requires one more chapter to complete his public instruction.

11. JESUS WARNS THE PEOPLE AGAINST THE EXAMPLE OF THE SCRIBES AND PHARISEES, vers. 1-12.
12. A TERRIBLE INDICTMENT OF THE JEWISH LEADERS, vers. 13–39.

1 THEN [o] spake Jē′sus to the multitude (multitudes), and to his disciples,
2 Saying (saying), [p] The scribes and the Phăr′ĭ-sees [q] sit in (on) Mō′ses' seat:
3 All (all things) therefore whatsoever they bid you, observe (*that* observe and do; *these* do and observe): [r] but do not ye after their works: [s] for they say, and do not.

o For vers. 1. 2, 5–7, see Mark 12. 38, 39 & Luke 20. 45, 46. Cp. Luke 11. 43. *p* Cp. Ezra 7. 6, 10, 25 & Neh. 8. 4. *q* Cp. Deut. 17. 10, 11 & John 9. 28, 29. *r* Cp. ch. 5. 20 & 15. 3–13. *s* Rom. 2. 17–23.

XI. THE PEOPLE WARNED AGAINST THE EXAMPLE OF THE SCRIBES AND PHARISEES, vers. 1–12.

PLACE. The court of the Temple.

PARALLELS. Mark 12: 38–40; Luke 20: 45–47.

Compare Luke 11: 43, 46.

1. **Then spake Jesus to the multitude,** who crowded the great court of the Temple, **and to his disciples,** who stood around him. Jesus had two duties to perform before he closed his public ministry. One was to warn the people against their leaders; the other to utter such terrible woes against the rulers as might arouse their conscience, and move them to a better life.

2. **The scribes and the Pharisees sit** (literally, have seated themselves) **in Moses' seat.** They have taken his place as a teacher, translating his Hebrew words into Aramaic, the common language of the people, interpreting and applying his precepts, and assuming his authority to enforce them. They regarded themselves as his successors and representatives. "We still speak of a professor's *chair*. And our own word *cathedral* just denotes *a church in which the bishop has his cathedra* or *chair*, from which he gives or may give instruction to the people of his charge. When Moses is represented as having a *chair*, he is regarded in the light of an authoritative instructor in things moral and spiritual. His chair was a chair of spiritual jurisprudence. The whole people of Israel were his pupils, and were bound to accept, with implicit submission, his teaching." [1]

3. **All** (things) **therefore whatsoever they bid you,** *i. e.*, when they report or translate Moses' commandments, out of the Book of the Law, as is implied by the word **therefore.** Very few of the people could possess copies of the Law, and they must therefore depend on the reading and

[1] Morison.

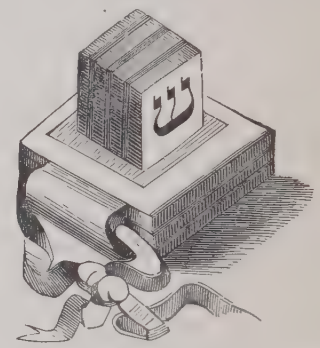
4 For Yea, [t] they bind heavy burdens and grievous to be borne, and lay them on them
men's shoulders; but they themselves will not move them with one of their fingers.
their finger.
5 [u] But all their works they do [v] for to be seen of men: for they make broad
[v] their phylacteries, and enlarge [w] the borders of their garments,
of their garments,

o See ver. 1. *t* Luke 11. 46. Cp. ch. 11. 28-30 & Acts 15. 10. *u* ch. 6. 1, 16. Cp. John 5. 44. *v* Ex. 13. 9. Deut. 6. 8 & 11. 18. *w* See ch. 9. 20.

translation furnished by the scribes. When they tell you the mind of God, do as they bid you, **but do not ye after their works.** Do not follow their example. **For they say, and do not.** They do not live according to the teaching of Moses.[1]

4. **For they bind,** as one ties fagots in a bundle, **heavy burdens,** either the duties inculcated by the Mosaic law which are weighty, and strict, and hard for weak human nature to bear, especially the ceremonial law, as Paul himself declares (Acts 15: 10; Gal. 5: 1), and which they made harder by demanding a servile obedience when there was no love of righteousness; or their minute and oppressive interpretations and applications of the law, which were indeed **grievous to be borne.** For "in expounding the law they add detail to detail, duty to duty, and, arranging them into classes, bind them as it were into heavy bundles, and pile them up on men's shoulders."[2] **But they themselves will not move them** ("touch them," Luke 11 : 46) **with one of their fingers,** much less bear them on their shoulders as they demanded of others. They were heartless, they expressed no sympathy, they gave no help to others, they did not inspire the motives which made obedience easy. But more than this, they did not live up to the Mosaic law, they had none of its spirit, they were immoral and dishonest, they substituted forms and ceremonies for loving obedience. The next verses, and the rest of the chapter, furnish proof in detail of this indictment. Here, according to Lange, was "a fourfold rebuke: (1) they make religion a burden; (2) an intolerable burden; (3) they lay it upon the shoulders of others; (4) they leave it untouched themselves, *i. e.*, they have no idea of fulfilling these precepts in spirit and in truth."

5. **All their works they do . . . to be seen of men.** They put on the outward form of virtue, which is easy. But the spirit of virtue, the change of heart, the unselfish motive, the victory over all evil, the supreme love of God and man, which are as difficult as they are valuable and heavenly, — these they have not. **They make broad their phylacteries.** "The Greek word transcribed *phylacteries* in our versions is from φυλάσσω, to *watch* or *guard*. It means originally a *guarded post*, a *fort;* then, generally, a *safeguard* or *preservative*, and therefore an *amulet*."[3] The phylactery was a small cubical box of black calf-skin in which were placed strips of parchment on



Phylactery, such as was worn on the forehead.

which were written four passages of Scripture from the Law, viz., Ex. 13: 2-10; 11-17; Deut. 6: 4-9; 13-22. These were fastened by leather straps, one to the forehead and another to the arm, according to a literal interpretation of Ex. 13 : 16 and Deut. 6 : 8, where they were com-

Phylactery bound on the arm.

manded to bind the law of God "for a sign upon thine hand, and they shall be as frontlets between thine eyes." To make broad the phylacteries was to enlarge the cases that held the law so as to make them conspicuous, as a sign of greater devotion to the law of God and of superior piety. The phylacteries were usually worn during prayer, but the Pharisees wore them as they walked the streets, or prayed standing in public places so that all might see and admire their great piety.

Enlarge the borders of their garments. The

[1] On the need and the power of example see Eschines' oration in reply to Demosthenes on the crown.

[2] Morison.

[3] Prof. Vincent, *Word Studies.*

6 And [x] love the uppermost rooms, chief place, at feasts, and [y] the chief seats in the synagogues,
7 [y] And greetings and the salutations in the [z] markets, marketplaces, and to be called of men, [a] Rabbi, Răb'bī.
8 [b] But be not ye called Răb'bī: for one is your Master, even Christ; [c] teacher, and all ye are [d] brethren.
9 [e] And call no man your father upon on the earth: [f] for one is your Father, which is in heaven.
10 Neither be ye called masters: for one is your Master, master; even the [g] Chrīst.
11 [h] But he that is greatest among you shall be your servant.
12 And [i] whosoever shall exalt himself shall be abased; humbled; and he that whosoever shall humble himself shall be exalted.

x Luke 14. 7, 8. *y* Luke 11. 43. *z* ch. 11. 16 & 20. 3. *a* See John 1. 38. *b* James 3. 1. *c* John 13. 13 (mg.). *d* Luke 22. 32. John 21. 23. See Philem. 16. *e* Cp. 1 Cor. 1. 12 & 3. 4. *f* ch. 6. 9. Mal. 1. 6. See ch. 7. 11. *g* See ch. 1. 17. *h* ch. 20. 26. *i* Luke 14. 11 & 18. 14. Cp. ch. 18. 4 & Prov. 29. 23 & Ezek. 21. 26 & James 4. 6, 10 & 1 Pet. 5. 5, 6.

fringes of their outer garment, or *talith*, the cloak whose hem or tassels at the four corners the woman touched who wished to be secretly healed (9 : 20). "In Num. 15 : 38 the Israelites were bidden to wear fringes about their outer garment, fastened to it with a blue ribbon, to distinguish them from other nations, and to remind them of their duty to obey the law. All these external badges had proper symbolical meanings."[1] "Blue was the symbolical color of heaven, the color of God, of his covenant, and of faithfulness to that covenant. The tassels themselves signified flowers or birds; probably pomegranates, and these crimson, and not blue, as the ribbons were. Thus they were remembrancers that fidelity to the covenant should flourish; or they were tokens that the flower of life was love, and that love must spring from faithfulness to the covenant."[2] The Pharisees made these fringes larger and more conspicuous in order to give the impression that they were unusually holy, and to gain a reputation for sanctity.

6. **Love the uppermost rooms**, places, at **feasts.** The highest and most prominent places, the couches of honor nearest the head of the table. **Chief seats in the synagogues.** "The conspicuous seats, the seats of honor, where they might concentrate on themselves many eyes, and in the occupancy of which they would secure to themselves the reverence of the congregation. There is doubtless a reference to the seats set for the elders, in front of the ark, where the law was deposited, and facing the mass of the worshippers."[3]

7. **And greetings in the markets**, or market places, the chief places of concourse. Here the crowd could see the reverence done to them as to superior persons. **And to be called of men, Rabbi, Rabbi,** *i. e.*, Master, Teacher, designating them as learned, honored, and influential. They loved the honor and authority which the title gave them.

8. **But be not ye called Rabbi.** Seek no honor placing one disciple above another, claim no authority as a teacher, whose word is law to others, and whose *ipse dixit* must be received and obeyed. Make no attempt to lord it over the faith of others. **For one is your Master,** Teacher, the source of true and authoritative teaching. **And all ye are brethren,** learning of one great teacher, and all disciples must equally get their truth from this source, and never dictate to one another, or suffer others to dictate to them. There is no better way than this for keeping the doctrine of the church pure.

9. **And call no man your father upon the earth.** Allow no one to have such authority over you in spiritual things as a father has over his little children. Give no one such honor or power over your conscience, for it belongs only to **your Father, which is in heaven.** "Of course the Saviour has no reference to the sphere of natural fatherhood in family circles, and the fitness and desirableness of the designation *father* on the part of children toward their parents. Neither was he intending to teach that none of his disciples would ever, in some of the lower spheres of spiritual influence, have *sons in the faith*, to whom they would sustain the endearing relation of *fathers in Christ Jesus.* (See 1 Cor. 4 : 15; 1 Tim. 1 : 2; 2 Tim. 1 : 2; Tit. 1 : 4.)"[3] This is a relation of love, not an artificial title sought vaingloriously.

10. **Neither be ye called masters**, leaders (καθηγαταί, not διδάσκαλοι, the "teacher" of ver. 8), leaders of sects, of divisions, of schools. **For one is your Master, even** (the) **Christ**, the Messiah. He is the divinely appointed leader and ruler of the Church; and no one has a right to take his place.

11, 12. See on 20 : 26–28.

[1] Prof. Schaff. [2] Lange. [3] Morison.

13 ¶ But[j] woe unto you, scribes and Phăr'ĭ-sees, hypocrites! for[because] ye [k]shut [up] the kingdom of heaven against men: for ye [l]neither go [enter not] in [yourselves, yourselves], neither suffer ye them that are entering [to go in, in to enter].

j Luke 11. 52. *k* Cp. ch. 16. 19. *l* Cp. ch. 5. 20 & 21. 31 & Luke 7. 30.

XII. EIGHT WOES AGAINST HYPOCRITES, vers. 13–39.

Compare Luke 11: 39–52.

Having finished his exhortation to the people, Jesus now turned to the scribes and Pharisees themselves. All day long he had used every possible influence to persuade them to repent and save themselves and their nation. All had been in vain. Only one thing remained, — to take away the mists that blinded their eyes, and show them the divine woes which were always flashing like lightning strokes against such characters as theirs. Canon Farrar quotes,

> "Since Love had played her part in vain,
> Vengeance leaped upon the stage;"

but Vengeance here was only Love in another form. "He let loose the storm of his indignation, and delivered against them the philippic which is recorded in these verses; flash after flash of scorn, peal after peal of woe."[1] It was "the wrath of the Lamb." All this in order to crash through their bitter prejudices, and to cause them to see the yawning gulf before them. And he ended his work for them with tears of pity and an almost broken heart of love.

Lange contrasts these woes with the Beatitudes, "on the supposition of a sustained antithesis between the benedictions and the woes: —

1. Poverty in spirit.	— Devouring widows' houses, and for a pretence making long prayers (being spiritually rich).
2. The mourners.	— The kingdom of heaven shut against others, while they go not in themselves. Fanaticism as opposed to repentance.
3. The meek.	— Zeal of proselytism.
4. Hungering and thirsting after righteousness.	— Casuistical morality, which corrupts the doctrine of sin, and raises the human above the divine. Swearing by the gold of the Temple, by the offering.
5. The merciful.	— Tithing mint and anise; and leaving out righteousness, *mercy*, and faith.
6. The pure in heart.	— Cleansing the outside of the platter, the inside being full of uncleanness and covetousness.
7. The children of peace (messengers of life).	— Sepulchres, full of hypocrisy and *lawlessness*.

Summary of the Seven.

Persecuted for righteousness' sake, as the prophets were persecuted.	— Murderers of the prophets.
Persecuted for Christ's sake.	— The ninth woe is wanting, and this is very significant. Instead of it, we hear the lamentation of Christ over Jerusalem.

13. **But woe unto you.** Not a threat, but a statement of fact. As certainly as God ruled, and the laws of the universe were in effect, so certainly must woes come upon the characters here described. Jesus put this sign upon hypocrisy, *Woe unto you*, as Christian and Hopeful, in *Pilgrim's Progress*, put up a signboard over the way that led to Giant Despair's castle, from which they had just escaped, warning men not to go that way.

Hypocrites, ὑποκριταὶ, *actors, those who play a part upon a stage*, usually, in ancient times, in a mask. The player appears in one character, while he is really another; the beggar may be dressed like a king, and a fool act the part of a wise man. Hence the word came to mean "the assuming of a false appearance of virtue and religion." The best of all descriptions of hypocrites is that given by Jesus in this chapter. St. Jude likens them to clouds without water. William Secker[2] says that hypocrites resemble looking-glasses, that present the faces which are not in them. How desirous are men to put the fairest gloves upon the foulest hands, and the finest paint upon the rottenest posts! Hypocrites are like counterfeit coin. "One may smile and smile and be a villain."

> "Oh, serpent heart, hid with a flow'ring face!
> Did ever dragon keep so fair a cave?"[3]

"Some hypocrites and mortified men that held down their heads like bulrushes were like the little images that they place in the very *bowing* of the vaults of churches, that look as if they held up the church, but are only puppets."[4] "When a man puts on a character he is stranger to, there 's as much difference between what he appears, and what he is really in himself, as there is between a vizor and a face."[5] "Saint abroad and devil at home."[6] "He stole the livery of the court of

[1] Prof. Stalker.
[2] *The Nonesuch Professor.*
[3] Shakespeare.
[4] Bacon's *Essays.*
[5] La Bruyère.
[6] John Bunyan.

14 Woe unto you, scribes and Phar'i-sees, hypocrites! for ye devour widows' houses, and for a pretence make long prayer: therefore ye shall receive the greater damnation.

15 Woe unto you, scribes and Phăr'ĭ-sees, hypocrites! for ye compass sea and land to make one *m* proselyte: and when he is made, become so, ye make him twofold more *n* than the child a son of *o* hell than yourselves.

m Acts 2. 10 & 6. 5 & 13. 43. *n* Cp. John 17. 12 & 2 Thess. 2. 3. *o* See ch. 5. 29.

heaven to serve the devil in." [1] "He was all false and hollow, though his tongue dropped manna." [2]

In the eighth circle and fifth pit of the *Inferno*, Dante saw the hypocrites. "We found a painted people." . "They had hoods lowered before their eyes, made of the same cut as those of the monks in Cluny. Outwardly they are gilded so that it dazzles, but within all lead, and so heavy that Frederick put them on of straw" (alluding to the leaden cloaks which the Emperor Frederick II. caused to be put on criminals, who were then burned to death; which were light as straw in comparison with these). "Oh, mantle wearisome for eternity." [3] The cure of hypocrisy is not by the giving up the outward forms and professions, but by a right heart and pure motive within. It is not in taking off the mask of virtue, — that is the punishment of hypocrisy. The cure is to become really what one would like to appear. [4]

Ye shut up the kingdom of heaven against men. Luke says (11 : 52), "Ye took away the key of knowledge." They shut the door of the kingdom of heaven in the faces of men, by their false teaching, by their misrepresentations of religion, by their bad example, and by opposing Jesus as the Messiah, and preventing the people from believing on him. This conduct proves them to be hypocrites, because they occupied the place of teachers of the truth, and pretended to be guides into the kingdom of heaven, while in fact they were keeping the people in ignorance, and leading them away from the kingdom.

14. **Woe unto you . . . for ye devour widows' houses.** This verse is not in the best manuscripts, and is placed by the Revisers in the margin. It is in both Mark and Luke. They took advantage of the weak and the unfortunate, who trusted them on account of their supposed piety. **Therefore ye shall receive the greater damnation** (κρίμα), judgment, condemnation. Nothing can be meaner, more despicable, deserving severer condemnation, than using the forms of religion not only to cover up villainy, but as the means of gaining the confidence of the unfortunate in order to rob them.

15. **Woe unto you . . . for ye compass,** go about, traverse, **sea and land to make one proselyte** to their way of thinking, not to the kingdom of heaven, not to righteousness, but to their sect. "Probably they sought to convert wealthy Gentiles, over whom they had obtained influence," [5] so that they might make gain of them. This was hypocritical, because a proselyte is made ostensibly to make him better, to lift him up into a higher region; and the attractive side, the theoretical side, of the Jewish religion, and motives of gain, must have been presented to one whom they would proselyte or they could not have gained him; while in fact their object was to make him, by example and teaching, **twofold more the child of hell than yourselves.** A child, or son, of hell is one whose principles and character are derived from hell. "They were made proselytes not so much to Judaism as to Pharisaism. They were not converted from heathen vices and depravity, but, in addition to these, were taught Pharisaic wickedness and hypocrisy." [6] "The expression *twofold more than yourselves* is peculiar. Very literally it would be, as Erasmus noted, *more twofold than you* (yourselves). That is, *ye make him a more twofold child of hell than you yourselves are.* It is implied that they themselves were *twofold children of hell.* They had been double-dipped, as it were, and double-dyed, in the spirit that bubbles up from beneath. But it is better on the whole to take the phrase διπλότερον ὑμῶν adverbially, as in our English version. They made their proselytes twice worse than themselves; for in such matters the learners outstrip their teachers. The Pharisaic proselytes in many cases would be only the basest and most unprincipled of men, who, getting nothing to change the inner character, but only learning outward lessons of hypocrisy, would outdo their teachers in the utter irreligion of the religiousness which they professed. 'Out of bad heathens,' as Erasmus says, 'they were made worse Jews.'" [7] Proselytes are apt to be more zealous and more extreme and intense than their teachers. There lies here a warning against "adding to numbers without spiritual life."

[1] Pollock. [2] Milton.

[3] Prof. Norton's translation.

[4] Rogers' *Greyson Letters*, "The Proper Punishment of Hypocrisy." One of the best illustrations of hypocrisy is "The Veiled Prophet of Khorassan," in Moore's *Lalla Rookh*. See, also, *Great Books as Life-Teachers*, "Ruskin's Seven Lamps of Architecture," pp. 49, 50.

[5] *Cambridge Bible.* [6] Canon Cook. [7] Morison.

16 Woe unto you, *p* ye *q* blind guides, which say, *r* Whosoever shall swear by the temple, it is nothing; but whosoever shall swear by the gold of the temple, he is a debtor!

17 Ye fools and blind: for whether is greater, the gold, or the *s* temple that sanctifieth the gold?

18 And, Whosoever shall swear by the altar, it is nothing; but whosoever sweareth by *t* the gift that is upon it, he is guilty.

19 Ye fools and blind: for whether is greater, the gift, or *u* the altar that sanctifieth the gift?

20 Whoso therefore shall swear by the altar, sweareth by it, and by all things thereon.

21 And whoso shall swear by the temple, sweareth by it, and by *v* him that dwelleth therein.

22 And he that shall swear by the *w* heaven, sweareth by *x* the throne of God, and by *y* him that sitteth thereon.

23 *z* Woe unto you, scribes and Phăr'ĭ-sees, hypocrites! for *a* ye pay tithe of

p See ch. 15. 14. *q* ver. 17, 19, 26. John 9. 39–41. Rom. 2. 19. 2 Pet. 1. 9. Rev. 3. 17. *r* Cp. ch. 5. 33–35. *s* Ex. 30. 29. *t* ch. 5. 23. *u* Ex. 29. 37. *v* 1 Kin. 8. 13. 2 Chr. 6. 2. Ps. 26. 8 & 132. 14. *w* Cp. ch. 21. 25. *x* See ch. 5. 34. *y* See Rev. 4. 2. *z* Luke 11. 42. *a* Deut. 14. 22. Cp. Luke 18. 12.

16. **Woe unto you, ye blind guides.** The picture is of a blind man trying to guide a caravan through unknown fields, with paths diverging in every direction through mountain passes dangerous with ravines and precipices, and through trackless deserts; or of a blind pilot steering a ship through unknown seas.[1]

They were blind, because their consciences were deadened, and their spiritual nature perverted. **Which say, Whosoever shall swear by the temple, it, the oath, is nothing,** you are not obliged to keep such an oath; you can disregard it with impunity; such a promise is not obligatory. **But whosoever shall swear by the gold of the temple,** the golden ornaments, or the gifts of gold in the treasury. **He is a debtor.** He is bound by his oath, under obligation to fulfil his promise. This was a mere arbitrary distinction, a piece of hair-splitting casuistry, which opened the door to unlimited dishonesty. It ignored wholly the obligation to keep a promise, whether enforced by an oath or not. It justified lying and cheating. Thus those who taught these things under the guise of moral teachers, interpreting God's law, were hypocrites.

17. **Ye fools,** stupid, unreasoning. **Whether is greater,** of more importance, more sacred. **The gold, or the temple that sanctifieth the gold.** The gold was sacred only because it belonged to the Temple dedicated to God.

18, 19. The same reasoning applies to **the altar,** and **the gift that is upon it. He is guilty,** rather, he is a debtor, exactly the same word as the closing one in ver. 16. He is bound by his oath, and is guilty if he breaks it.

21. **Whoso shall swear by the temple, sweareth by it, and by him that dwelleth therein.** Every oath, whatever form it takes, is an appeal to God, never to an inanimate thing.

22. **Shall swear by heaven, sweareth by the throne of God,** etc. "The sum of the whole is: Every oath is by God; hence make no distinctions between oaths; 'swear not at all' (chap. 5: 34). These verses really refer, not only to swearing, but to truthfulness in word and act; they forbid those false distinctions used to palliate the crime of lying."[2] "The modern application is to all casuistry the object or effect of which is to lessen the sense of obligation to the law of God. Of a like casuistry in the Jesuit fathers, Pascal, in his *Provincial Letters*, gives numerous illustrations. These permitted miserliness, envy, falsehood, private revenge, duelling, and even assassination, on grounds as frivolous as those which Christ here exposes."[3]

23. **Ye pay tithe of mint and anise and**

[1] "To set up a sense we lack as a source of truth is a fine piece of blind man's assurance.

And the rarity of it consists in the haughty air of superiority which is assumed toward the philosophy that sees God, by this philosophy that has to grope its way. It makes one think of a mole exclaiming 'How they excite my pity with their prate about a sun!'"—Victor Hugo, *Les Misérables*, Cosette, p. 133.

[2] Prof. Schaff.

[3] Lyman Abbott.

mint and anise and *b* cummin, and have (omitted left undone) the weightier (*matters* matters) of the law, *c* (judgment, judgement, and) mercy, and faith: (but *d* these ought ye ye ought) to have done, and not to (leave have left) the other undone.

b Isai. 28. 25, 27. *c* Ps. 33. 5. Jer. 5. 1. Mic. 6. 8. Zech. 7. 9. *d* Cp. 1 Sam. 15. 22.

cummin. *Mint* is the well-known fragrant herb, and is still a favorite in the East. *Anise* is an

Spearmint (*Mentha viridis*).

umbelliferous plant similar to dill, "producing a small flower of a bright brown color, and a flat-

Anise (*Pimpinella anisum*).

tened elliptical fruit or seed. Both the plant and the seed were used by the ancients as a condiment, the latter having a warm aromatic flavor resembling that of the caraway seed. Its use with us is medicinal, as a carminative. It is still extensively cultivated in the East." [1] "Anise seeds have an aromatic flavor, and a pleasant warm smell." [2]

Cummin "is an umbelliferous plant, something like fennel (*Cuminum sativum*, Linn.). The seeds have a bitterish warm taste, with an aromatic flavor. It was used in conjunction with salt as a

Cummin (*Cuminum cyminum*).

sauce. (Plin. xix. 8). The Maltese are said to grow cummin at the present day, and to thresh it in the manner described by Isaiah." [1] The Jews were required to pay tithes, that is, a tenth of all their income from the fruits of the field, and the increase of their flocks and herds, for the support of the tribe of the Levites, who had no tribal lands, but were set apart to be the teachers of the people, and for the service of the Temple; there were tithes also for the poor. For the law of tithes see Lev. 27: 30–33; Deut. 14: 22–29. The tithes corresponded in part to our taxes for the support of schools, the poor, etc., and to what is given for the support of the church, and for benevolence. The Pharisees were exceedingly particular, so that they carefully tithed even the most trifling herbs, that may have grown wild

[1] Smith's *Bible Dictionary*.

[2] *Century Dictionary*.

24 [Ye] Ye blind guides, which strain [at a] out the gnat, and swallow [a] the [e] camel.
25 [f] Woe unto you, scribes and Phăr'ĭ-sees, hypocrites! for [g] ye [make clean] cleanse the outside of [h] the cup and of the platter, but within they are full [of] from [i] extortion and excess.
26 [Thou] Thou blind Phăr'ĭ-see, cleanse first [that *which is* within] the inside of [h] the cup and [of the] of the platter, that the outside [of them] thereof may [be] become clean also.

e ch. 19. 24. *f* For vers. 25–28, cp. ch. 15. 11–20. *g* Luke 11. 39, 40. *h* Mark 7. 4. *i* Luke 16. 14 & 20. 47.

in their fields. "The tithe of these plants would be very small; but to exact it would indicate scrupulous conscientiousness. The Talmud tells of the ass of a certain Rabbi which had been so well trained as to refuse corn of which the tithes had not been taken."[1]

But they omitted the weightier, most important, matters of the law, judgment, justice, mercy and faith, faithfulness, fidelity to God and man. This was hypocrisy, because it showed a want of sincerity in doing God's will, hiding a real and great disobedience under a very strict form of visible obedience in small matters easy to be done. **These ought ye to have done, etc.** "Faithfulness in what is great never leads to neglect of what is least. But attention first of all to what is least leads to neglect of what is great."[2]

24. **Strain at** (διυλίζοντες fr. διά, *thoroughly* or *through*, and ὑλίζω, to *filter* or *strain*). Străin *at* is an old misprint of the first edition of our Authorized Version, which has been perpetuated. Trench argues that the translators intended "strain *out*," as in the R. V. "Certain insects were bred in wine. Aristotle uses the word *gnat* (κώνωπα) of a worm or larva found in the sediment of sour wine."[1] "It was the custom of the stricter Jews to strain their wine, vinegar, and other potables through linen or gauze, lest unawares they should drink down some little unclean insect therein, and thus transgress (Lev. 11: 20, 23, 41, 42)—just as the Buddhists do now in Ceylon and Hindustan—and to this custom of theirs our Lord here refers."[3] A recent traveller in north Africa wrote to Arbp. Trench: "In a ride from Tangier to Tetuan I observed that a Moorish soldier who accompanied me, when he drank, always unfolded the end of his turban and placed it over the mouth of his *bota*, drinking through the muslin to strain out the gnats, whose larvæ swarm in the water of that country."[4] "There is not a single respect in which we can say the morality of modern Buddhists is high. It is not even so as regards kindness to animals. Although they strain the water which they drink in order not to kill animalculæ, they are given to treat mercilessly their beasts of burden, and in most of the countries in which they are to be found are very ready to take human life."[5]

And swallow a camel. The largest animal known in Palestine, and also ceremonially unclean (Lev. 11: 4). The Hindus have a similar proverb, "Swallowing an elephant, and being choked with a flea." Christ's illustration was "sharper than a two-edged sword." "It is not the scrupling of a little sin that Christ here reproves; if it be a sin, though but a gnat, it must be strained out; but the doing of that, and then swallowing a camel. In the lesser matters of the law to be superstitious, and to be profane in the greater, is the hypocrisy here condemned."[6]

25. **Ye make clean the outside of the cup and . . . platter.** From Mark 7: 4 we learn that the Pharisees were very particular as to the ceremonial washing of cups, pots, and brazen vessels. But in their characters they were like those who washed the outside, which was seen by other people, while concealed within was all manner of foul uncleanness. They were hypocrites because they cared only to appear clean, not to be clean. "The word platter (παροψίς) properly denoted a *side dish*, in the sense of *some dainty*, . . . then the dish or *platter* in which the dainty was placed." **Within they are full of extortion and excess.** *Extortion* (ἁρπαγῆς) is that which is snatched away, plundered by violence and force, rapine, plunder.

The expression "They are full of extortion," is literally, "They are full *from* or *out of* extortion." "The things that fill the cup and platter were got *out of* two causes, each as unclean as it was possible to be. The one was *an efficient cause*, 'rapine.' The other was *a final cause*, 'debauchery.' Rapine was indulged in; debauchery was desired: and hence the full platter and the full cup. Both were brimming with uncleanness."[7]

26. **Cleanse first that which is within.** The only real moral purity must come from within, from a right heart, from pure motives, from love to God and man, from right principles. Then **the outside of them may be clean also.** If the inner life is vile and unclean, the uncleanness

[1] Prof. M. R. Vincent, *Word Studies.*
[2] Prof. Schaff, *Rev. Com.*
[3] *Cambridge Bible.*
[4] Arbp. Trench, *Bible Revision.*
[5] Prof. Robert Flint, LL. D., Edinboro.
[6] Matthew Henry. [7] Morison.

27 *j* Woe unto you, scribes and Phăr'ĭ-sees, hypocrites! for ye are like unto
k whited sepulchres, which (indeed outwardly) appear beautiful, (outward,) but (are within inwardly) are full of
dead (men's) men's bones, and of *l* all uncleanness.

28 Even so ye also *m* outwardly appear righteous unto men, but (within inwardly) ye are
full of *n* hypocrisy and iniquity.

29 *o* Woe unto you, scribes and Phăr'ĭ-sees, hypocrites! (because for) ye build the
(tombs sepulchres) of the prophets, and garnish the (sepulchres tombs) of the righteous,

j Luke 11. 44. *k* Cp. Acts 23. 3. *l* Eph. 5. 3. Cp. Num. 19. 16 & 2 Kin. 23. 16. *m* ver. 5. *n* Luke 12. 1. *o* Luke 11. 47, 48.

within is sure to defile the outside also. But if the inner life is pure and honest, it will express itself in a pure and honest outward life. All true reform of the individual or the nation must begin within and work outward. Religion of the heart is the only basis of pure morality.

27. **For ye are like unto whited sepulchres.** "Not the rock-tombs, belonging mostly to the rich, but the graves covered with plastered structures. In general, cemeteries were outside of cities; but any dead body found in the field was to be buried on the spot where it had been discovered. A pilgrim to the Passover, for instance, might easily come upon such a grave in his journey, and contract uncleanness by the contact (Num. 19 : 16). It was therefore ordered that all sepulchres should be whitewashed a month before the Passover, in order to make them conspicuous, so that the travellers might avoid ceremonial defilement." [1] "The Jerusalem Gemarists give the reason thus: *It is that they may be like the leper. The leper cries out,* UNCLEAN! UNCLEAN! *and here, in like manner, uncleanness cries out to you, and says,* COME NOT NEAR! When newly 'whited,' as they had just been at the period of the year when our Saviour was speaking, they looked clean, and gleamed beautifully, as we have often seen them, in the sunshine." [2] Hence this comparison was especially pointed.

But are within full of dead men's bones, and of all uncleanness. *Uncleanness,* ἀκρασίας, from ἀ, *not,* and κράτος, *power;* want of self-control, incontinence, intemperance, debauchery, yielding to passion or appetite. The ceremonial law prohibiting contact with dead bodies was based on natural law. The decaying body is not only repulsive to the sense of smell, and defiling to the touch, but at certain stages the impurity is deadly. The smallest particle introduced into the blood through a wound may bring early death. Many a doctor has fallen a victim to this contact in the dissecting-room. So spiritual death is not only defiling, but deadly (1 John 3 : 14, 15). The heart of the hypocrite is not only repulsive, but destructive; not only evil to himself, but contaminating to others; not only contaminating, but a leaven of death.

28. **Even so ye also.** Note that Jesus spoke this to the faces of the guilty ones, not behind their backs. He was no backbiter. The hard truths he was compelled to utter were spoken to the guilty ones themselves, and at the cost of the speaker's life. Note, too, that Jesus could speak such words as follow, *because he knew what was in the hearts of men.* It is seldom that *we* do know, and therefore we must be careful lest we bear false witness about our brethren. **Ye also outwardly appear righteous unto men.** They whitewashed themselves with religious forms, long prayers, broad phylacteries, sanctimonious looks, good advice to others, and sharp criticisms. **But within ye are full of hypocrisy, and iniquity** (ἀνομίας), lawlessness, wickedness, "reckless disregard of the very law of which they professed to be the interpreters." [3] "Your heart is not a temple of the living God, but a grave of pestilent corruption; not a heaven, but a hell. And your religion is but the whitewash — hardly skin-deep." [4]

MODERN APPLICATIONS. Perhaps there are very few deliberate hypocrites, but there are many dangers in the direction of hypocrisy, against which we must guard; as saying our prayers, but not really praying; making a profession of religion when we have none in our hearts; going through the forms of religion, without its spirit; doing good, giving to the poor, with selfish motives; saying hard things against the church to appease our own consciences for not becoming Christians.

29. **Because ye build the tombs of the prophets.** Our Lord seems to be referring to those four remarkable monuments which stand even now at the base of the Mount of Olives, in the valley of Jehoshaphat, just below the southeast angle of the Temple mount. They would be conspicuous objects to one standing on the platform of the Temple. They are miscalled, at present, the tombs of Zechariah, Absalom, Jehoshaphat, and St. James. Not unlikely, the first two

[1] Prof. M. R. Vincent, *Word Studies.* [2] Morison. [3] Bp. Ellicott. [4] Dean Alford.

30 And[and] say, If we had been in the days of our fathers, we would[should] not have been partakers with them in the blood of the prophets.

31 Wherefore ye be witnesses unto[witness to] yourselves, that ye are [p]the children[sons] of them which killed[that slew] the prophets.

32 [q]Fill ye up then the measure of your fathers.

33 Ye[Ye] serpents, [r]ye generation[ye offspring] of vipers, how can[shall] ye escape the damnation[judgement] of [s]hell?

34 ¶ [t]Wherefore,[Therefore,] behold, [u]I send unto you [v]prophets, and wise men, and [w]scribes: and [x]some[some] of them ye shall[shall ye] kill and crucify; and [x]some[some] of them shall ye [y]scourge in your synagogues, and [z]persecute *them* from city to city:

p Acts 7. 51, 52. *q* Gen. 15. 16. Dan. 8. 23. 1 Thess. 2. 15, 16. *r* ch. 3. 7 & 12. 34. *s* ver. 15. *t* For vers. 34–36, cp. Luke 11. 49–51. *u* ch. 10. 16. *v* See Acts 13. 1 & 1 Cor. 12. 28. *w* ch. 13. 52. *x* See ch. 21. 35. *y* ch. 10. 17. Mark 13. 9. Luke 21. 12. Acts 22. 19 & 26. 11. Cp. Luke 12. 11. *z* ch. 10. 23.

were the tombs which the scribes and Pharisees were engaged in constructing at the time that our Saviour addressed them, and that the other two were the sepulchres which they were "garnishing" or beautifying, viz., in their entrances. "Nothing can seem more natural than that our Lord should have pointed to them, and thus have increased the force of his words by adducing the very monuments on which his hearers were gazing, as proofs of the hypocrisy he was upbraiding."[1] **Garnish**, adorn. **Sepulchres of the righteous**, those considered especially saintly, implying that they admired and approved of their characters. Even the cruel Herod rebuilt the tomb of David.

30. **And say, If we had been in the days of our fathers**, etc. "Our fathers, worthy men! were quite wrong in shedding the blood of the prophets. Had we been they, we should have acted quite differently! Was there anything wrong in saying this? Not in the least, *if what they said was true*."[2] This was their *profession;* the next verse shows their practice.

31. **Wherefore ye be witnesses unto yourselves**, etc. By your plotting to kill me, a prophet, you show that while you profess to differ from your fathers, by building their tombs, in reality you are doing just what they did. For that very afternoon they had been plotting against Jesus (ch. 21 : 45, 46; 22 : 15). So Calvin says of the corrupt church in his day: "Let them, then, adorn the images of the saints as they please, with incense, candles, flowers, and every kind of pomp. If Peter were now alive, they would tear him in pieces; Paul they would bury with stones; and if Christ himself were yet in the world, they would burn him with a slow fire."

32. **Fill ye up then the measure of your fathers.** The language both of prophecy and of terrible irony and invective. Fill up the measure of guilt. The past generations had been adding iniquity to iniquity, till they had almost come to that state when there was no hope of their being better, and nothing was left but to destroy them. The present generation were filling up the measure; and with the killing of Jesus the measure became full, and the end of their nation was at hand.

33. **Ye serpents.** "Representing their cunning, insidious, deceitful, and depraved character, their hurtful and poisonous influence." "Forever hissing at the heels of the holy." **Generation of vipers**, offspring, brood of vipers. They were the brood of viperous parentage, and all of the old serpent, the devil (Gen. 3 : 1; John 8 : 44; Rev. 12 : 9). **How can ye escape the damnation** (condemnation) **of hell?** *i. e.*, the judgment which condemns to punishment in hell.

34. **Wherefore.** Because of your character, when I send prophets to you, you will slay them. **Prophets . . . wise men**, referring to John the Baptist, and the apostles and preachers of the New Kingdom. They were sent, as the Bible everywhere represents, to warn and save the nation. God would do everything possible for their salvation. **And some . . . ye shall kill and crucify.** "Kill directly, as Stephen (Acts 7 : 59); indirectly, as James (Acts 12 : 2); and crucify by means of the Roman power, as Symeon, second Bishop of Jerusalem (Eus., *H. E.*, iii. 32)."[3] **Per-**

[1] "It may be fairly suspected that the one circumstance respecting him which they secretly dwell on with the most satisfaction, though they do not mention it, is that he is *dead;* according to the concluding couplet in the verses on the 'Death of Dean Swift:' —

"'And since you dread *no further lashes*,
Methinks you may forgive his ashes.'"

Whately's *Annotations*, pp. 18, 19.

Lowell in his Essay on Dante says, "In 1396 Florence voted a monument, and begged in vain for the metaphorical ashes of the man of whom she had threatened to make literal cinders if she could catch him alive." *Essays*, p. 141.

[2] Morison.

[3] *Cambridge Bible.*

35 That upon you may come all the [a] righteous blood shed upon the earth, from the blood of [b] righteous A'bel (A'bel the righteous) unto the blood of [c] Zach-a-ri'as (Zach-a-ri'ah) son of Bar-a-chi'as, [d] whom ye slew between the [e] temple (sanctuary) and [f] the altar.

36 Verily I say unto you, [g] All these things shall come upon this generation.

37 [h] O Jĕ-ru'să-lĕm, Jĕ-ru'să-lĕm, [i] thou that killest (which killeth) the prophets, and stonest (stoneth) them which (that) are sent unto thee, (her!) [j] how often would I have [k] gathered [l] thy children together, [m] even as a hen gathereth her chickens [n] under her (her) wings, and [o] ye would not!

a ch. 27. 4 (mg.). Rev. 18. 24. *b* Gen. 4. 4, 8. Heb. 11. 4. 1 John 3. 12. *c* Cp. Zech. 1. 1. *d* 2 Chr. 24. 21 (?). *e* ver. 16 (mg.). See Luke 1. 9. *f* Ex. 40. 6. 2 Kin. 16. 14. Ezek. 40. 47. *g* Cp. ch. 10. 23 & 16. 28 & 24. 34. *h* For ver. 37–39, see Luke 13. 34, 35. Cp. Luke 19. 41–44. *i* See ch. 21. 35. *j* Cp. ch. 26. 55 & Luke 4. 44 (mg.). *k* Cp. Ps. 147. 2 & Prov. 1. 24. *l* Luke 23. 28. *m* 2 Esd. 1. 30. Cp. Deut. 32. 11, 12. *n* Ruth 2. 12. *o* John 5. 40.

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secute them from city to city, as Paul pursued Christians to Damascus; as he was himself driven from Antioch in Pisidia, from Iconium, from Philippi, and from Thessalonica.

35. **That upon you may come.** Denoting the intent of God, not merely the result. It was in God's plans to bring the final punishment upon this generation. **All the righteous blood.** The blood of holy men who had been martyred for righteousness' sake, *i. e.*, the punishment for shedding it. **From the blood of righteous Abel** (Gen. 4: 8–12; Heb. 12: 24) **unto the blood of Zacharias son of Barachias.** (1) "A very memorable martyrdom is recorded in 2 Chron. 24: 20–22, in which a prophet, named Zachariah, was stoned 'in the court of the house of the Lord, at the commandment of the king.' That Zachariah was, however, the son of Jehoiada. Still, Jehoiada may have had two names, or he may have been the grandfather of Zacharias, and Barachias have been his father; or, as many think, 'the son of Barachias' is a copyist's error, for it is not given in Luke's account. The Books of Chronicles, in which this murder is recorded, are the last in order in the Hebrew canon; and the expression 'from the blood of Abel to the blood of Zacharias' may naturally be understood as meaning from the first murder recorded in Scripture to the last."[1] (2) "The only 'Zechariah the son of Barachias,' in the Old Testament, is the minor prophet whose writings occupy the last place but one among the prophetic books of the Old Testament (Zech. 1: 1). Of his death we know nothing."[2] **Whom ye slew**, you, the Jewish nation. **Between the temple**, the sanctuary, the temple proper. **And the altar**, the altar of burnt offerings in the court of the priests.

36. **All these things shall come upon this generation.** Referring to the fearful calamities to come upon the Jewish people, culminating in the destruction of Jerusalem, about forty years afterwards. No individual received more punishment than was his just due. But the nation as a nation accumulated guilt. When we sin against the laws of nature in our bodies there seems to be no immediate evil result; but the evil accumulates by repeated acts, till at last, by one act, the cup of iniquity is full, and the body succumbs to disease, and perhaps death. The same process goes on in the individual soul, and also in the life of a nation.

37. **O Jerusalem, Jerusalem.** "How ineffably grand and melting is this apostrophe! It is the very heart of God pouring itself forth through human flesh and speech. It is this incarnation of the innermost life and love of Deity, pleading with men, bleeding for them, and ascending, only to open his arms to them, and win them back by the power of this story of matchless love, that has conquered the world, that will yet 'draw all men unto him,' and beautify and ennoble humanity itself."[3] **How often would I have gathered thy children together.** All through their history; but especially now, when by receiving their Messiah they might have been under the protection and care of the Almighty and reigned as Queen, dispensing blessings to all the world. **As a hen.** The Greek is generic, *as a bird*. **Gathereth her chickens under her wings**, for rest, warmth, affection, defence against all enemies, shelter from all storms. The whole scheme of salvation, the very existence of the Bible itself, the coming of Jesus Christ, are positive proofs that God wants men to be saved, by repenting and believing (see John 3: 14–17; Isai. 55: 1, 7; Ezek. 18: 32; Mark 16: 15; Luke 19: 10; John 1: 7). **And ye would not.** The only reason they were not saved was their own choice of evil. This is the bitterest ingredient in the cup of the lost, that they have no one to blame but themselves.

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[1] Canon Cook. [2] Ellicott. [3] David Brown, D. D.

38 Behold, [p] your house is left unto you desolate.
39 For I say unto you, Ye shall not see me henceforth, till ye shall say, [q] Blessed *is* he that cometh in the name of the Lord.

p Cp. Isai. 64. 11 & Jer. 12. 7 & 22. 5. *q* ch. 21. 9. Cited from Ps. 118. 26.

In Retsch's illustrations of Goethe's *Faust* there is one plate where angels are dropping roses upon the demons who are contending for Faust's soul, and every rose is like molten metal, burning and blistering wherever it touches. So fell the tears of Christ upon the hearts of the rulers of the Jews.

38. **Behold, your house**, the Temple; the home of their religion, of their hopes, of their existence as a people of God. **Is left unto you desolate.** *Your house is left to you: I leave it; and therefore it is desolate.* The Saviour's reference is to his own leaving or departure, — a leaving that involved the penal departure of his Father as the Head of the theocracy. The Jewish theocracy was to be a theocracy no longer. "Ichabod" was to be its name. The Jews henceforth, instead of being the people and kingdom of God, would be a mere Semitic nationality, under the dynasty of the Herods, or under no dynasty at all. Their temple would be an empty edifice, dedicated to the empty celebration of an empty ritual.[1]

39. **Ye shall not see me henceforth.** He now closed his public ministry among them. They saw him no more in his Messianic ministration and work. After his resurrection he appeared, not to all the people, but to chosen witnesses (Acts 10: 41).[2] **Till ye shall say, Blessed is he that cometh in the name of the Lord.** That is, till you shall recognize me as your Messiah, as the multitudes did on his triumphal entry, quoting from Ps. 118: 26 (see Matt. 21: 9). Some time the Jews will be converted, and hail Jesus as their King, and will be restored in some way to be a people of the living God. They were not left without a star of hope, even in the dense darkness of this hour.

After this Jesus taught a lesson from the widow's gift of two mites (Mark 12: 41–44). Then some Greeks came to see Jesus, starting from which fact Jesus discoursed concerning the necessity of his death, and a voice of approval came from heaven (John 12: 20–36). The Jews still rejected Jesus as their Messiah, though even of the rulers many secretly believed on him, but were afraid to confess the truth (John 12: 37–50).

Thus ended the public ministry of Jesus.

[1] Morison.

[2] G. W. Clark, D. D.

CHAPTER 24.

PRIVATE DISCOURSES OF JESUS WITH HIS DISCIPLES IMMEDIATELY AFTER THE CLOSE OF HIS PUBLIC MINISTRY.

Tuesday afternoon, April 4.

SECTION XX. — DISCOURSE CONCERNING THE DESTRUCTION OF JERUSALEM, AND THE END OF THE WORLD.

PLACE. On the Mount of Olives, overlooking Jerusalem.
PARALLELS. Mark 13: 1–37; Luke 21: 5–36.

1 [r] AND JĒ'SUS went out' from the temple, and departed from the temple: was going on his way; and his disciples came to *him* for him to shew him the buildings of the temple.

r Cp. ch. 21. 23. For vers. 1–51, see Mark 13. 1–37 & Luke 21. 5–36.

1. **And Jesus went out, and departed from the temple**, that is, from the court of the Temple where he had been teaching. He had just closed his public ministry, and was on his way to Bethany. **His disciples came to him**, gathered around him, **to shew him the buildings of the temple**, ἱεροῦ, the whole mass of the temple buildings, not ναοῦ, which was the sanctuary, the Temple proper; saying, "See what manner of stones and what buildings" (Mark). "Beautiful for situation, the joy of the whole earth is Mount Zion, on the sides of the north, the city of the

2 And Je'sus
But he answered and said unto them, See ye not all these things? verily I say unto you, *s* There shall not be left here one stone upon another, that shall not be thrown down.

3 ¶ And as he sat upon
on the *t* mount of Ŏl'ives, the disciples came unto him *u* privately, saying, Tell us, *v* when shall these things be? and what *shall be* the sign of thy *w* coming, and of *x* the end of the world?

s Luke 19. 44. *t* See ch. 21. 1. *u* Cp. Mark 4. 34. *v* Cp. Acts 1. 6, 7. *w* vers. 27, 37, 39. See 1 Thess. 2. 19. *x* See ch. 13. 39.

great king" (Ps. 48 : 2). Jerusalem in all her magnificence was like "a bride adorned for her husband," "a city of palaces and right royally enthroned as none other." "But alone and isolated in its grandeur stood the Temple mount. Terrace upon terrace its courts rose, till, high above the city, within the enclosure of marble cloisters, cedar-roofed and richly ornamented, the Temple itself stood out a mass of snowy marble and of gold, glittering in the sunlight against the half-encircling green background of Olivet. In all his wanderings the Jew had not seen a city like his own Jerusalem. Not Antioch in Asia, not even imperial Rome herself, excelled it in architectural splendor. Nor has there been, either in ancient or modern times, a sacred building equal to the Temple, whether for situation or magnificence." "It occupied an elongated square of from 925 to 950 feet and upwards."[1] Thus the buildings occupied an area of about 19 acres. "The Temple of Jerusalem was one of the wonders of the world." The Babylonian Talmud says, "He that never saw the Temple of Herod, never saw a fine building." The Rabbis said, "The world is like an eye. The ocean surrounding the world is the white of the eye; its black is the world itself; the pupil is Jerusalem; but the image within the pupil is the Sanctuary." "Josephus, in his *Antiquities* (xv : 11, 3), speaks of the stones of a certain part of the edifice as being each, in length, 25 cubits (37 to 44 feet); in height, 8 (12 to 14 feet); in breadth, about 12 (18 to 21 feet). In his *Wars* (v : 5, 6), he speaks of some of the stones as 45 cubits in length, 5 in height, and 6 in breadth."[2]

The disciples "called his attention to those nine gates overlaid with gold and silver, and the one of solid Corinthian brass, yet more precious; those graceful and towering porches; . . . those alternate blocks of red and white marble, recalling the crest and hollow of the sea waves; those vast clusters of golden grapes, each cluster as large as a man, which twined their splendid luxuriance over the golden doors."[3] Josephus states that "fastened all around the Temple were barbaric spoils." So Luke speaks of the Temple as adorned with offerings (Luke 21 : 5).

2. **There shall not be left here one stone upon another.** At the time of this prophecy no event was more improbable. The world was at peace. The Jewish nation was subject to the Roman Empire, and under its protection. Yet within 40 years the prophecy was fulfilled to the letter. After a three years' siege by Vespasian and his son Titus, Jerusalem was taken, and the Temple destroyed August, A. D. 70. The expression means total destruction of the Temple. It would be fulfilled even though a single stone could be found upon another, but as a matter of fact not a vestige of the Temple remains. The great stones which have been found by recent explorations belong to the foundations of the immense platform on which the Temple was built. The literal fulfilment is the more remarkable since, as we learn from Josephus (*Bella Judaica*, vi : 4 : 6–8). Titus made every effort to preserve the Temple from destruction, and only when this was found to be impossible, did he order the work of destruction to be completed.

3. The disciples were amazed and perplexed at this strange statement of Jesus which seemed to render impossible the coming of the New Kingdom as it floated in vision before their imaginations, or as foretold by the prophets interpreted by the whole trend of popular thought and expectation. How could the Kingdom of God come when the dwelling place of God — the centre of the religious life of God's people for a thousand years, around which clustered the prophecies and the hopes of ages — should be destroyed? They walked on in silence up the slopes of Olivet toward Bethany by the road on which Jesus had made his triumphal entry three days before, till they came to the turn in the road where, to one descending, the city and Temple suddenly burst into view in all their glory. The Temple stood before them "like a mount of snow fretted with golden pinnacles." **And as he sat.** Probably upon the exact spot where the famous tenth legion of the Roman soldiers who captured Jerusalem were encamped during the siege. **The disciples came unto him privately,** so that other travellers on the road would not hear or interrupt them. Mark mentions four, Peter, James, John, and Andrew, as

[1] Edersheim, *The Temple and its Services.* [2] Morison. [3] Farrar.

the leaders in this questioning. "The sun was setting, and the whole city, with the surrounding valleys and hillsides alive with the camps of pilgrims, lay beneath him in the evening light. The history of a thousand years, the divine oracles speaking by a thousand voices, the monuments of prophets, patriarchs, and kings, the visitations of angels, miraculous interpositions in judgment and in blessing, from the offering of Isaac and the building of the Temple, were present to him, as he looked upon Moriah and Zion, and heard the murmur and the evening songs of a million people gathered within and around the walls of the holy city."[1] They asked two questions,—

(1) **When shall these things be?** the destruction of the Temple he had just foretold.

(2) **What shall be the sign of thy coming, and of the end of the world?** *αἰῶνος*, the existing, current age, the present dispensation.

First. Note that such questions are not unimportant. They are very practical. The disciples had to pass through seasons of great darkness, confusion, and trouble. They needed to know what these things meant, how they were to act in them, and what the outcome would be. The answer brought encouragement, warning, hope, enthusiasm, and courage. It guided their conduct. It threw light on their path. It kept them from being taken unawares. It was necessary that they should understand that, though their Master was crucified, this was not the end. He himself, "this same Jesus," was to return in glory and establish his kingdom.

Second. This revelation of the future caused that the very things which would naturally discourage them should be the means of confirming their faith. The night itself revealed the stars of heaven. It is stated that two Jewish Rabbis were crossing Zion hill in Jerusalem, and looking at its desolation. One wept at the sight, while the other cheerfully smiled. He who had laughed inquired the cause of the other's tears. "How can I help weeping," he replied, "when I see the threatenings against our Holy City so exactly fulfilled?" "And for that reason I rejoice," said the other, "for the prophecies of its glorious restoration are equally plain and numerous; and, as the punishment has been literally executed, we may the more certainly expect the accomplishment of the promises."

Third. The answers to these two questions are commingled. They are coupled together as belonging to one great event, the fulfilment of which was to take place within that generation. Prof. Broadus well says, "This discourse certainly foretells in the outset the destruction of Jerusalem; and in the conclusion certainly foretells the final coming of our Lord, with the general judgment of mankind." "Every attempt to assign a definite point of division between the two topics has proved a failure." "But if the destruction of Jerusalem was itself in one sense a coming of the Lord, why may we not suppose that the transition from this to the final coming is gradual?" "Similar cases occur in the Old Testament, where a prediction refers to some nearer event, and also, by typical relation, to a kindred event in the remoter future. This view does not rest on the crude notion of a 'double sense' in Scripture words or phrases, but on the unquestionable Scripture use of types, prophetic as well as ceremonial."[2] "Some of these utterances clearly point to the Destruction of Jerusalem; others equally clear to the Return of the Christ. But there are some which might apply to either or both; and we, who stand between the two, cannot be sure which one, if only one, is intended. In its application to the lives of the hearers each event taught a similar truth, and conveyed a similar warning; and therefore a clear-cut distinction between them was as little needed as an exact statement of date."[3]

Fourth. We need, as really as did the disciples, the glorious and blessed truth of the *second coming of Christ*. We should be very careful that because there have been misinterpretations and false views about the coming of the Lord, we do not, on that account, cloud to our eyes and hearts the comfort and hope in the promise of his coming.

Fifth. There is only one way in which I have been able to bring into harmony and yet include, all that is said here and elsewhere concerning the second coming of Christ; namely, that this one great event consists of a series of epochs or marked stages each of which is rightfully and naturally called his second coming; just as when we speak of the coming of the day, we speak of it as having come when the first rays touch the mountain tops, or we think of it as having come when the sun rises, or again when the sun has burst through the clouds and we see the full blaze of day.

To change the figure, the Second Advent seen in a vision of the future is like a great mountain range, which is really but one mountain system, and, when described as seen from a distant point, may be described as one mountain; and yet, on a nearer view, is seen to consist of three ranges, rising one above the other, with long spaces between. We find, then, a threefold coming, all preceded by the same signs, all characterized in

[1] Daniel March, D. D.

[2] *American Commentary on Matthew.*

[3] Prof. Alfred Plummer, D. D., in *Int. Crit. Com.* on Luke.

4 And Jē'sus answered and said unto them, *y* Take heed that no man
deceive you.
lead you astray.

y Jer. 29. 8. Eph. 5. 6. Col. 2. 8. 2 Thess. 2. 3. 1 John 3. 7.

the same terms, all based on the same principles, all the effects of the same forces.

I. There was *a second advent which began with the day of Pentecost and culminated at the destruction of Jerusalem*, when Christ's kingdom had really been established on the earth in the place of the old dispensation. In John 14: 16–18 it is expressly implied that Jesus himself came in the coming of the Holy Spirit. The removal of the holy city and the Temple and its sacrifices made way for the acceptance of the true kingdom and sacrifice of Christ. The accuracy of the prophecy recorded in this chapter in its application to this event, the repeated declaration that this coming should take place *in this generation* (ver. 30), and that some of the disciples who heard Christ should be still living when he came in the glory of his Father with the holy angels (Mark 9 : 1 ; Matt. 16 : 27, 28 ; Luke 9 : 26, 27), prove that this must be what is referred to.

(1) This period was a second coming, a return to earth and to his church after his death. This was absolutely necessary to the work of the apostles in building up the church. They could not found it on a dead Christ. The first rays of this coming began at the resurrection, appeared more fully in the gift of the Holy Spirit at Pentecost, and became a completed coming, or phase of his coming, when the old dispensation passed away at the destruction of Jerusalem, and the new dispensation took its place. This was the beginning of an altogether new order of things. It was the removal of the chief obstacle to the full development of the kingdom by the destruction of Jerusalem and the old form of the kingdom. Paul's illustration from the grafting of a new growth on an old stock (Rom. 11 : 17-21) helps us to understand this. For 40 years the new graft of Christ's kingdom was becoming united to the old Jewish dispensation. Then by the destruction of Jerusalem the old branches were cut off and left the new graft alone on the tree. It was the tree ; it had "come." Then it was to grow into the large and flourishing tree full of fruit — the completed coming, when the Master will appear and gather the fruit.

(2) This coming was *personal :* he promised to abide with the church. "Lo, I am with you alway."

(3) It was preceded by great judgments such as are here described.

(4) The Gospel was first preached to all nations. So Paul says in Romans 1 : 8 (written A. D. 58), and in Colossians 1 : 6, 23 (written A. D. 62).

(5) Thus we see that the expectation of the immediate coming of their Lord was not a mistake of the apostles. It was not a looking for something 2000 years ahead, but for a sunrise whose herald rays showed them that it might come at any time, though it was not revealed to them how or when it should come.

II. *There will be a second advent when the Gospel has triumphed over all the earth, and the millennium is ushered in, and the believers, scattered through many nations and organizations, shall become one visible kingdom, free, governed only by Jesus Christ and his heavenly principles.* This is the full coming of the kingdom prophesied in Daniel and the Old Testament ; this is the coming the later apostles were expecting ; this is what John means when he prayed, "Lord Jesus, come quickly." It was not the judgment and the destruction of the world, but the *conversion of the world* they longed for, and for which we long and pray, saying, *Thy kingdom come.* (1) This is *personal*, for Christ will reign in every heart. (2) It will be preceded by the fall of all the powers of evil, all tyrannies, and hierarchies, and slaveries, and idolatries, and systems of false religion. This will not take place without wars and persecutions. The governments of the earth, as now founded, must perish, and be changed into governments for the good of the people. These stars shall fall, and powers be shaken. (3) The Gospel will be preached to all the world. (4) It will be a coming in the clouds with power and glory ; for the source of all these triumphs of Christ is from heaven, the triumph is spiritual, and no kingdom is so glorious or so powerful as this.

III. *There will be a coming of Christ, in visible presence, at the time of the judgment and resurrection*, as in 1 Thess. 4 : 13–18 ; Rev. 20 : 7 to 22 : 5 ; and Matt. 25. This, too, will be preceded by all the signs foretold as tokens of his coming.

The Signs of his Coming. **4. Take heed.** The four moral keynotes of this Discourse on the Last Things are "*Beware*," "*Watch*," "*Endure*," and "*Pray*." [1] **That no man deceive you.** By leading them to think that Christ had come again in the flesh, or that these newcomers were the real Messiah, instead of Jesus. They would come in such a way, with such claims, with such attempts at political leadership, or at the head of armies, that many would imagine that the great promised Deliverer of the Jews had come. It would be hard even for the very elect to escape from being deceived.

[1] Farrar.

5 For [z] many shall come in my name, saying, I am [the] [a] Christ; and shall deceive many.
lead many astray.

6 And ye shall hear of wars and rumours of wars: see that ye [b] be not troubled: for [all] *these things* [c] must [needs] come to pass; but the end is not yet.

z vers. 11, 24. Jer. 14. 14. 1 John 2. 18. *a* See ch. 1. 17. *b* 2 Thess. 2. 2. *c* Rev. 1. 1.

5. **For many shall come in my name.** The name of Messiah. **Saying, I am** (the) **Christ.** The promised Messiah, the great Deliverer and King for whom the Jews were looking. During the years following Christ's death, and partly because the Christians were preaching that Jesus was the Messiah, the Messianic hopes of the Jews were at fever-heat; many enthusiasts arose and awakened false expectations, and drew large numbers after them (Acts 5: 36, 37; 1 John 2: 18). Josephus says that in the reign of Claudius (who died A. D. 54), the land was overrun with magicians and impostors, who drew multitudes of the people into the deserts to see the signs and miracles which they promised. And now, as his coming draws near, there are arising many men with their new religions and doctrines, pretending to be better than Christianity, and to be the real Messiahs of humanity; and they still deceive many.

6. **And ye shall hear of wars and rumours of wars.** Josephus gives an account of the troublous times before the fall of Jerusalem. The peace that prevailed over the world during Christ's life was soon broken. Rome too was troubled. "Four Roman emperors were murdered in swift succession." But especially in Palestine "the war fiend ran riot." The Jews themselves were divided into contending factions, who slew each other by thousands. The neighboring nations joined one party or the other. Then the Jews revolted against the Romans, and the Roman armies overran the whole country. Blood flowed like water. Note that the Jews brought this destruction on themselves (1) by revolting; (2) by factions; (3) by destroying the food in the city, and killing one another. Without these fruits of their sin they could have remained till this day. Their faith in Christ would have saved them.

See that ye be not troubled, as if everything were going to ruin. Because they are the sign of the coming of Christ and his kingdom, **for all these things must come to pass.** These great trials and commotions which were to follow the coming of the Prince of Peace would naturally bring discouragement and doubt, or even despair. To guard against this, Jesus not only foretells the facts, but assures them that in a wicked world they are necessary facts and signs that the kingdom of God is coming. The world of evil will not yield without a conflict. The wrong customs and methods of government and society cannot be removed without commotion. The old things will not give way to the new without disturbance. This is still true, and will be true till the final triumph of perfect righteousness and love. Compare the French Revolution, and the whole history of the progress of freedom and religion and reforms. The disturbance will first be moral, then often physical in wars and rumors of wars.

Taking the world as it is, it is impossible that the kingdom of God should come without awaking opposition and wars, any more than one can build a house without disturbing the ground; or improve a city by putting in gas, electricity, waterworks, and electric roads, without disturbing the streets.

This unrest in educational and scientific and social affairs, disturbing the old foundations in many respects, reversing old theories and ancient customs, is not to be feared if earnestness and truth are behind it, because it is a sign of life. It is a proof that the forces of the kingdom of heaven are active and working. The one thing to be feared is the inactivity of death, the peace that comes from the cold of winter, freezing men together into peace. It is the harmony of a garden, not of an iceberg, that the church needs. "When the assaults of skepticism seem to shake the church of Christ till it totters, we shall see that naught is being overthrown but some unsound interpretations of the Scriptures on which a counterfeit Christianity has been erected; that thereby the eternal city is being brought forth into a clearer light, *the city that hath the foundations, whose builder and maker is God:* and that the living Word is manifesting himself in more radiant glory." [1]

But the end is not yet, immediately. The end of troubles, the end of the disturbing process preceding the coming of the Son of Man, nor the final results you are to expect; as one might have said to an angel beholding the chaos, This is not the end; wait till you see the new heavens and the new earth; or as the farmer might say to one watching his ploughing in the spring, This is not the end; fruits and flowers and grain lie beyond.

[1] W. D. Ridley in *The Expositor.*

7 For *d* nation shall rise against nation, and *e* kingdom against kingdom: and there shall be *f* famines, and pestilences, and earthquakes, in divers places.
8 All these things are the beginning of *g* sorrows.
9 Then *h* shall they deliver you up *i* to be afflicted, and *j* shall kill you: and *k* ye shall be hated of all the nations for my name's sake.

d 2 Chr. 15. 6. Cp. Rev. 6. 4. *e* Isai. 19. 2. *f* Acts 11. 28. Rev. 6. 8, 12. *g* John 16. 21. Acts 2. 24 (Gk.). Rom. 8. 22. *h* ch. 10. 17, 21. *i* ver. 21, 29. Rev. 2. 10. *j* ch. 23. 34. John 16. 2. *k* See ch. 10. 22.

7. **For nation shall rise against nation.** (See under ver. 6.) At Seleucia, about A. D. 38, there were disturbances in which more than 50,000 Jews were slain. But this is an almost universal fact when active good makes such progress as to threaten the existence of organized evil. **There shall be famines.** We learn of several famines during this period, one in Judea, foretold by Agabus (Acts 11 : 28) not far from A. D. 49; three others in the reign of Claudius, A. D. 41–54, one in Greece, A. D. 50, and two in Rome, A. D. 41 and 52.[1] **And pestilences.** A pestilence in Rome, A. D. 65, carried off 30,000 persons. "This year, disgraced by so many deeds of horror, was further distinguished by the gods with storms and sicknesses. Campania was devastated by a hurricane which overthrew buildings, trees, and the fruits of the soil in every direction, even to the gates of the city, within which a pestilence thinned all ranks of the population, with no atmospheric disturbance that the eye could trace. The houses were choked with dead, the roads with funerals: neither sex nor age escaped."[2] **And earthquakes, in divers places.** "Perhaps no period in the world's history has ever been so marked by these convulsions as that which intervenes between the Crucifixion and the destruction of Jerusalem."[3] "Between this prophecy and the destruction of Jerusalem there were (1) a great earthquake at Crete, A. D. 46 or 47; (2) one at Rome, A. D. 51; (3) one at Apamia in Phrygia, A. D. 53; (4) one at Laodicea in Phrygia, A. D. 60; (5) one in Campania; (6) one in Jerusalem, A. D. 67, described in Josephus."[4] The frequency and destructiveness of the earthquakes of this period have been remarked upon by Seneca.[5] Pompeii was partly destroyed by an earthquake, A. D. 63; and, with Herculaneum, wholly overthrown in August, A. D. 79.

8. **All these are the beginning.** For greater moral woes flow out of them. Only the smaller portion of the terrors of those days could be described, but some are foretold in the verses that follow. **Of sorrows** (*ὠδίνων*), travail pains, birth throes. In the midst of these sorrows they are to find not alarm, but hope, for they are the labor pangs of the birth of the kingdom of God; they are the prophecy and promise of redeemed humanity, of the golden age; and all these sorrows shall be forgotten in the joy at the birth of the new heavens and the new earth.

9. **Then shall they deliver you up to be afflicted,** *εἰς θλῖψιν*, unto tribulation. The dominant idea is that of *pressure*. There was a provision of the old English law by which those who wilfully refused to plead in the courts had heavy weights placed on their breasts, and so were pressed to death unless they yielded. One case only of the infliction of the *peine forte et dure* occurred in this country in its early history, in the case of Giles Corey. "He would be thrown upon his back and weights of stone or iron would be piled upon him. There he would be kept sometimes for days, the weights gradually increasing, until the sufferer had consented to plead or had been pressed to death."[6] This is a vivid picture of the pressure which persecution placed upon the souls of the disciples to compel them to deny Christ. "We read of Christians bound in chairs of red-hot iron, while the stench of their half-consumed flesh rose in a suffocating cloud to heaven; of others who were torn to the very bone by shells or hooks of iron; of holy virgins given over to the lust of the gladiator or to the mercies of the pander; of two hundred and twenty-seven converts sent on one occasion to the mines, each with the sinews of one leg severed by a red-hot iron, and with an eye scooped from its socket; of fires so slow that the victims writhed for hours in their agonies; of mingled salt and vinegar poured over the flesh that was bleeding from the rack; of tortures prolonged and varied through entire days."[7]

Ye shall be hated of all (the) nations. Because everywhere they had the same evils to oppose, the same conflict with customs, and false religions, and vested interests. **For my . . . sake,** not because they were disagreeable in themselves, but because they were teaching his truth, and working for his kingdom. There is no virtue in being hated; but only in being hated on account of good deeds, and a good character. The Acts

[1] See Josephus, *Antiquities*, iii : 15.
[2] Tacitus, *Annals*, xvi : 10–13.
[3] E. H. Plumptre. [4] *Wars of the Jews*, iv : 4, 5.
[5] Prof. A. C. Kendrick, D. D.
[6] Allen's *New England Tragedies in Prose*, p. 147.
[7] Lecky, *History of European Morals*, vol. i. 497.

10 And then shall many [be offended, stumble,] and shall [l betray deliver up] one another, and shall hate one another.

11 And many [m] false prophets shall [rise, arise,] [n] and shall [deceive many. lead many astray.]

12 And because iniquity shall [abound, be multiplied,] the [o] love of the many shall wax cold.

13 [p] But he that [shall endure unto endureth to] the end, the same shall be saved.

14 And this gospel of the kingdom [q] shall be preached in [all the the whole] world for a [r witness testimony] [s] unto all the nations; and [t] then shall the end come.

l ch. 10. 21. *m* See ch. 7. 15. *n* ver. 5, 24. *o* Cp. Luke 18. 7 & Rev. 2. 4. *p* See ch. 10. 22. *q* Rom. 10. 18. Col. 1. 6, 23. Cp. Mark 14. 9. *r* ch. 10. 18. *s* ch. 28. 19. *t* Cp. ver. 6.

and the Epistles give abundant evidence of the fulfilment of this prophecy. Secular historians confirm and emphasize the fact. Tacitus (*Annals*) calls Christians "a race of men hated for their crimes," and Suetonius (*Nero*, 16) and Pliny (*Epistles*, x. 97) speak in the same way. According to Gibbon (*Rome*, ii. 11) Christians were hated, and charged with licentiousness, incest, and human sacrifices.

10. **Then shall many**, of my professed disciples, **be offended**, stumble, trip, be snared, be scandalized. The persecutions were too terrible for any who were not Christians in their inmost hearts. **Shall betray**, or deliver u to the magistrates, **one another**, even parents, brothers, and relatives (Luke).[1]

11. **And many false prophets shall arise**, teachers who claim to have received a message from God, when they had not received it, but taught falsehood for the truth. **And shall deceive many**, by their plausibility, by teaching things agreeable, but sinful. "The Epistles give abundant evidence of the many false teachers who arose in the apostolic age; and, if then, how much more in the ages succeeding. Rom. 16: 17; 2 Cor 11: 13; Gal. 1: 7; 1 Tim. 1: 6, 20; 2 Tim. 2: 17, 18; 1 John 2: 18; 4: 1; Jude 3, 4; Rev. 2: 14, 20; see, also, Acts 20: 30." [2]

12. **And because iniquity**, lawlessness, **shall abound**, πληθυνθῆναι, *shall be multiplied*, shall increase rapidly, not by addition, but by multiplication. Paul, in 2 Thess. 2: 7, speaks of "the mystery of iniquity" as already working in the church, and in ver. 3, of a falling away first before the day of Christ could come. **The love of** (the) **many**, τῶν πολλῶν. "The A. V. in omitting the definite article misses the force of Christ's saying. It is not the love of *many people* only that shall be chilled, but of *the* many, *the majority, the great body*" [3] **Shall wax** (grow) **cold**, ψυγήσεται. "The verb means originally *to breathe* or *blow*, and the picture is that of spiritual energy blighted or chilled by a malign or poisonous wind." [3] The love of many did not burn with sufficient intensity of light and heat to resist the depressing and deadly effect of the moral degeneracy around them, and of the persecutions to which they were subjected. Wickedness, immorality, selfishness, destroy love in the heart.

13. **But he that shall endure**, ὑπομείνας, remain steadfast under trial and opposition, **unto the end**, to the end of his trial, his probation, so that all the wickedness and persecution of the world do not cool his love, or cause him to fall. This is a general statement, and includes perseverance to the destruction of Jerusalem, to the hour of death, and to the Day of Judgment. **Shall be saved.** Luke adds, "There shall not a hair of your head perish. In your patience possess ye (acquire, win) your souls." (1) They should be saved from the overwhelming destruction that came upon Jerusalem. Warned by what Christ said on this occasion, it is said that every Christian escaped (see on ver. 15). And there was no real loss beyond what was best for the kingdom of God, not even to the value of a single hair. (2) They were saved to eternal life; they not only should enter heaven, but enter in full possession of their souls, of all that was purest and best in themselves, of all that was possible to them of good.

14. **And this gospel of the kingdom**, this good news that the kingdom of heaven is at hand, and may be theirs through Jesus the Christ, **shall be preached**, proclaimed, heralded, **in all the world.** The Gospel had been published through the Roman world as then known, and every nation had received its testimony before the destruction of Jerusalem. (See Rom. 1: 8; Col. 1: 6, 23; 2 Tim. 4: 17.) And now the marvellous progress of the Gospel during the last century, the growing interest in missions, the open doors into every nation, the rapidity with which the Gospel follows every movement into new and hitherto unknown regions, are signs that the second coming of Christ in his kingdom is at hand. **For a witness unto all** (the) **nations**, concerning Jesus and his Gospel, so that all might know him, believe on him, and be saved. **Then shall the end come,**

[1] See Tacitus' description of the persecutions under Nero, *Annals*, xv. 44.

[2] G. W. Clark.

[3] Prof. M. R. Vincent, *Word Studies.*

15 When ye therefore shall see the abomination of desolation, which was [u] spoken of by Dăn'iel the prophet, standing in [v] the holy place (w whoso readeth, let him let him that readeth understand),

16 Then then let them which be that are in Jū-dæ'â flee into unto the mountains:

u Dan. 9. 27 & 11. 31 & 12. 11. Cp. 1 Macc. 1. 54. v Cp. John 11. 48 & Acts 6. 13 & 21. 28. w Cp. Dan. 9. 22, 23, 25 & Rev. 1. 3.

the end of this period of trial, the end of the Jewish dispensation.

NOTE the Four Dangers to which the church was exposed in those days: —

(1) Persecutions.
(2) Divisions and internal contentions.
(3) False teachers.
(4) Worldliness.

The dangers are still the same, and they follow largely in the order here revealed by Jesus. As soon as Christianity becomes strong enough to make its teachings felt in government and in society, there comes a period of persecution, as now in Turkey and China. This being overcome and compelled to further the interests of Christianity, there is apt to be a period of schism, and internal conflict, rival sects, party arrayed against party. Then comes, with full liberty, a period of false teachers and prophets, false philosophies, false doctrines, false methods. Then, with prosperity, numbers and power, comes the danger of worldliness.

NOTE the various signs of the coming of the Son of man: —

(1) Political and social disturbances.
(2) Commotions and convulsions of nature, and the troubles which they bring.
(3) Persecutions.
(4) Defections in the church.
(5) The Gospel preached to all the world.

These were the signs in those early days. They are signs in our own day of the coming of the Son of man in his kingdom, when the whole world shall belong to him.

15. **When ye therefore shall see the abomination of desolation, spoken of by Daniel the prophet** (Dan. 9: 27; 11: 31; 12: 11). Daniel uses the expression "abomination that maketh desolate." The expression "abomination" is frequently employed in the Old Testament as a designation of idols (as in 1 Kings 11: 5, 7; 2 Kings 23: 13), because idolatry was hateful to God, and was the source of desolation and ruin to Israel. It brought on the destruction of Samaria, and the ruin of Jerusalem and the Temple, followed by the Exile. The sanctuary, the visible dwelling of God with his people, was the source of strength and prosperity. When this was defiled or destroyed, desolation quickly followed.

Abomination, βδέλυγμα, from βδελύσσομαί, *to turn one's self away from on account of the stench; to feel a nausea or loathing for food. Hence, anything that produces moral loathing or disgust; an abomination.* The "abomination of desolation" referred to in this verse as standing **in the holy place**, that is, Jerusalem, where it ought not to stand (Mark), refers to the presence of the Roman armies in and around the city, with their idolatrous ensigns, outraging the religious feelings, foreboding ruin, and bringing desolation.[1] **Whoso readeth, let him understand.** Probably a remark by the author to call special attention to the command of Jesus, the heeding or not heeding of which meant life or death to the disciples.

16. **Then**, when this signal is given, without delay **let them which be in Judæa**, the region overrun by the Roman armies,[2] **flee into the mountains.** "According to Eusebius (*Church History*, iii. 5, 3) the Christians of Jerusalem were warned, before the war broke out, by a prophetic revelation, to leave the city and retire to Pella in Peræa, between Gerasa and Hyppos on the edge of the tableland, scarcely among the mountains; but the way to it from Judea led across both the Judean and Moabite hills, so that 'to the mountains' is a sufficient index of the direction which the flight was to take."[3] The tradition has always been accepted, that not one of the despised "sect of the Nazarenes" perished in the siege. This was one example or incident of the flight. Those in the country could

[1] It is possible that the "abomination of desolation" may also refer to the bands of robbers from the country who betook themselves to such rapine, barbarity, and iniquity that the people preferred to be ruined by the Roman soldiers than by them. These bands of wickedness crept into Jerusalem, and were the cause of sedition and famine and of the destruction of the city. They came into the sanctuary with their polluted feet, and made the Temple of God their resort, their stronghold, a shop of tyranny, full of many abominations by these blood-shedding villains. — Josephus, *Wars*, iv. 3.

A Temple of Jupiter was erected on the site of the Temple about A. D. 135, when Jerusalem was again captured amid scenes of great suffering; and in A. D. 635 the Mosque of Omar was built upon the same spot, and still remains.

[2] See Josephus, *Wars of the Jews*, bk. iv., for a description of the terrible devastation of Palestine.

[3] Prof. H. B. Swete, on *Mark*.

17 [x] Let [let] him [which that] is on the [y] house top [housetop] not [come go] down to take [any thing out of out the things that are in] his house:

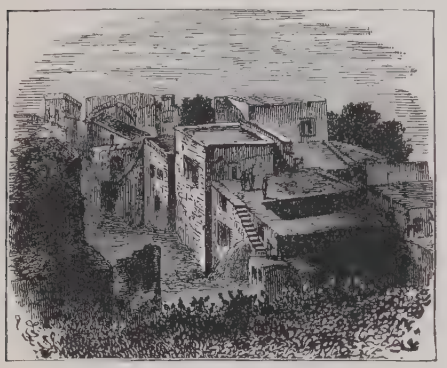
18 [Neither and] let him [which that] is in the field [not] return back to take his [clothes, cloke.]

19 [And But] [z] woe unto them that are with child and to them that give suck in those days!

20 [But And] pray ye that your flight be not in the winter, neither on [the a] sabbath day:

x Luke 17. 31. y See Luke 5. 19. z Luke 23. 29.

escape with comparative ease. Jesus practically forbids his disciples to join in the terrible series of revolts, and fierce insurrection, and frantic but useless attacks upon the Romans, or the fanatical



Oriental House with Outside Stairs to the Roof.

disputes between the different factions of the Jews. They could do no good. Courage, but not wisdom, prevailed in the councils of the Jews, and the disciples could best serve their country and the world by keeping away. The struggle was hopeless. It would accomplish little, even if successful, and it would give the impression that the Christians were but a sect of these turbulent Jews, instead of followers of the Prince of Peace, and thus hinder the saving work of the Gospel.

17. This verse applies to those who are in the city (Luke). **Let him which is on the house top**, where people often went for rest and cool breezes, and who could easily come down into the street by the usual outside stairs, **not come down to take any thing out of his house**, for it was not safe to make any delay. Verse 18 gives another illustration of the haste that was required. Even for his outer garments, used at night, and for protection against storms, and almost indispensable, no one should delay, so imminent was the peril.

How it was Possible to escape. The question naturally arises how it would be possible for the Christians to escape after the city was surrounded by the Roman armies, every gate shut and guarded, and every avenue of escape closed. Full two years before the final investment of the city (Oct., A. D. 66), Cestius Gallus marched a Roman army upon the city, and commenced its siege. He took the lower town, Bezetha. Josephus says, "If he had continued the siege but a little longer, he would have taken the city. But Cestius removed his army; and having received no loss, unadvisedly departed from the city." "In this manner the providence of God verified the prophecy of Christ, and interposed for the deliverance of the disciples." Josephus further tells us that "immediately after Cestius's departure, many of the Jews daily fled from the city, as from a sinking ship." The city was again invested by Vespasian in May, A. D. 69, but soon afterwards returning to Cesarea he learned of the death of the Roman emperor Vitellius, and wishing to become his successor he was proclaimed emperor at Cesarea on July 3. There was a civil war amongst the Romans, and the prosecution of the war against Jerusalem was interrupted. Here was another opportunity of escape. "By such warnings," says Farrar, "the Christians were preserved. Before John of Giscala had shut the gates of Jerusalem, and Simon of Gerasa had begun to murder the fugitives, so that 'he who escaped the tyrant within the wall was destroyed by the other that lay before the gates' — before the Roman eagle waved her wing over the doomed city, or the infamies of lust and murder had driven every worshipper in horror from the temple courts — the Christians had taken timely warning."

19. **And woe unto them.** "Alas, for them," an expression of sympathy, but also emphasizing the necessity of haste, for the armies returned suddenly, after which it would be impossible for them to escape.

20. **But pray ye.** What they could do themselves they were to do, in the spirit of prayer and faith, but were not to expect divine interference to save them if they refused to take heed to his counsel. But there were other things over which they had no control. In this case there was nothing left for them to do but to pray, and such prayer was answered, as we see under ver. 22. **That your flight be not in the winter.** That Providence would overrule the affairs of men so

21 For then shall be [a]great tribulation, [b]such as was not since the beginning of the world to this time, no, nor ever shall be.

22 And except those days should be shortened, there should no flesh be saved: but for [c]the elect's sake those days shall be shortened.

a ver. 29. Dan. 12. 1. Cp. Rev. 7. 14. *b* Rev. 16. 18. *c* ver. 24, 31. Isai. 65. 8, 9. Luke 18. 7. Cp. ch. 22. 14.

that they would not have this additional danger to health and life, and this increase of woes. "The siege by Cestius, sent as a warning to them as the after-siege was sent as a punishment to their unbelieving countrymen, occurred in the month of October. Their flight, therefore, was not in the winter."[1]

Neither on the sabbath. A flight on the Sabbath would greatly add to their trials. For (1) it would be against the consciences of many or most of the Christians who had been trained in the strictest ideas of Sabbath keeping. "In the Maccabean wars such scruples had borne deadly fruit."[2] (2) "The Jewish customs as to travelling on the Sabbath, such as shutting the gates on the Sabbath, the limit of a Sabbath journey to 2000 cubits, about a mile,[3] etc., would make the Christians' journeying on that day infinitely more difficult, even although they themselves might be perfectly free from any scruples. They would, in addition to other embarrassments, expose themselves to the severest persecutions of Jewish fanaticism, and be denounced as apostates and traitors to the religion of their fathers."[4]

"It has been proved that the day on which Cestius, in a panic which never could be accounted for, suddenly called off his troops and retreated from the city was a Tuesday. Their flight, therefore, was not upon the Sabbath."[1]

21. **For then,** at this siege, **shall be great tribulation,** θλῖψις. See on verse 9. **Such as was not since the beginning of the world.** Josephus declares that "the misfortunes of all men, *from the beginning of the world*, if they be compared to those of the Jews, are not so terrible as theirs were," "nor did any age ever produce a generation more fruitful of wickedness *from the beginning of the world*." The zealots maintained a "reign of terror" far more dreadful than that of the French revolution.

"The horrors of war and sedition, of famine and pestilence, were such as exceeded all example or conception. The city was densely crowded by the multitudes which had come up to the Passover. Pestilence ensued, and famine followed. The commonest instincts of humanity were forgotten. Acts of violence and cruelty were perpetrated without compunction or remorse, and barbarities enacted which cannot be described. Mothers snatched the food from the mouths of their husbands and children, and one actually killed, roasted, and devoured her infant son. (Compare Lev. 26 : 29; Deut. 28 : 56, 57.) The besieged devoured even the filth in the streets; and so excessive was the stench that it was necessary to hurl 600,000 corpses over the wall, while 97,000 captives were taken during the war, and more than 1,100,000 perished in the siege."[5] This probably included those massacred throughout Palestine.

Then was fulfilled "all things which were written" (Luke) in their scriptures, such as Leviticus 26 : 14–34; Deuteronomy 28 : 15–68; 29 : 19–28; Daniel 9 : 26, 27; Zechariah 11; 12 : 2. Josephus' description of these events, in his *Wars of the Jews*, is the best commentary on this passage. All these things came upon the Jews because they rejected Christ. Had they received him as the Messiah, they would not have aroused the opposition of the Roman Empire as they did. They would not have been cruel, turbulent, riotous, and factious. They would have been united and patriotic, not permitting selfish considerations to lead them to fight one another as fiercely as they fought the Romans.

22. **Except those days should be** (R. V., "had been") **shortened,** "by the Lord" (Mark). The duration of the siege was shortened by the divine decree **for the elect's sake,** his chosen, his beloved ones, the seed of the kingdom of heaven. Otherwise no one would have survived those terrible times. Alford refers to several things which God's providence used or guided as the means of shortening the siege.

(1) The Jews, being divided into factions, had totally neglected any preparations against the siege.

(2) The magazines of corn and provision were burned just before the arrival of Titus.

(3) Titus arrived suddenly, and the Jews voluntarily abandoned parts of the fortification.

(4) Titus himself confessed that he owed his victory to God, who took the fortifications of the Jews.

(5) It was not the original intention to storm

[1] Hanna, *Life of Christ*.

[2] Prof. Swete. See 1 Maccabees 2 : 32 ff.

[3] So Josephus, *Antiquities* (xiii. 8, 4).

[4] Lange. On the destruction of Jerusalem, see *Young Folks' Josephus*, later chapters; Josephus' *Wars of the Jews*; Tacitus' *History*, v. 13; Milman's *History of the Jews*, ii. 16; Merivale's *Roman History*, vi. 59; *Helena's Household*, a story of those times; Charlotte Elizabeth's *Judea Capta*.

[5] *Cambridge Bible*.

23 [d] Then if any man shall say unto you, Lo, here [is the] Chrīst, or, [there; Here;] believe *it* not.

24 For there shall arise [e] false Chrīsts, and [f] false prophets, and [g] shall shew great signs and wonders; [f insomuch that, if *it were* possible, they shall deceive the very elect.] so as to lead astray, if possible, even the

25 Behold, [h] I have told you [beforehand.] before.

26 [Wherefore if] If therefore they shall say unto you, Behold, [i] he is in the [desert;] wilderness; go not forth: [behold, *he is*] Behold, he is in the [secret] inner chambers; believe *it* not.

27 [j] For as the lightning cometh [out of] forth from the east, and [shineth] is seen even unto the west; so shall [also] be the [k] coming of the Son of man. be.

28 [l For wheresoever] Wheresoever the carcase is, there will the eagles be gathered together.

d Luke 17. 23. Cp. ver. 5, 26. *e* Cp. 1 John 2. 18. *f* ver. 11. *g* Deut. 13. 1–3. 2 Thess. 2. 9–11. Rev. 13. 13, 14 & 16. 14 & 19. 20. Cp. Acts 8. 9. *h* John 13. 19 & 14. 29. Cp. 2 Pet. 3. 17. *i* Acts 21. 38. *j* Luke 17. 24. *k* vers. 3, 37, 39. *l* Luke 17. 37. Cp. Job 39. 30.

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the place, but events at Rome made it necessary that Titus should hasten back, and he therefore adopted this method of shortening the siege.

23, 24. **Then**, during this period of distress, or immediately after, **there shall arise false Christs**, that is, those who falsely claim to be the Messiah, **and false prophets**, who pretend to have a message from God in this calamity. "When the desolation of the Temple and the great θλίψις shall have arrived, false Messiahs, and such as falsely represent themselves to be prophets, will again come forward and urge their claims with greater energy than ever, nay, in the most seductive ways possible. The excitement and longing that will be awakened in the midst of such terrible distress will be taken advantage of by impostors with pretensions to miracle-working, and then how dangerous they will prove!"[1]

Shall shew great signs. A sign is something ordinary or extraordinary presented as a proof of one's claim. It is one of the names given to Christ's miracles, especially in the Gospel of John (see the Revised Version). **And wonders**, unearthly, portentous phenomena, describing the result produced on the people. "To exhibit portents belongs especially to the false prophet or false Christ, whose ambition it is to startle and excite admiration. But his wonders are as false as his pretensions (2 Thess. 2: 9)."[2] Compare the case of Simon Magus (Acts 8: 10). **Deceive the very elect**, the choice, picked men, the very best as distinguished from the common crowd. In these troublous times the people grasped at every straw of hope.

25. **Behold, I have told you before.** I have given you warning lest you be deceived. "Forewarned is forearmed." The very calamities, the appearance of plausible false teachers and false Messiahs, would thus confirm the faith of the disciples in Jesus the Christ. "While the primary application of the warning is to the destruction of Jerusalem, its application to later times is made clear by other passages of Scripture. See 2 Thess. 2: 8–12; 1 Tim. 4: 1–3; 2 Tim. 3: 1–5; Rev. 13: 14; 19: 19–21."[3]

26. **Behold, he is in the desert**, like Elijah and John the Baptist. **Go not forth**, for you will not find the Messiah there. Josephus says, "Many impostors persuaded the people to follow them into the wilderness, promising to work miracles there." "One led out thus 4000 men."

In the secret chambers, the same word that is translated "closet" in Matt. 6: 6. These were teaching in private, or pretending that from secluded study they had found the way of help.

27. Those who looked in these places for guidance and help were looking in the wrong places, **for as the lightning**, etc., . . . **so shall also the coming**, ἡ παρουσία, the presence, the arrival, the visible advent, **of the Son of man be.** It will be confined to no locality, but will be manifest and recognized universally, as when the lightning shines the whole heavens are aglow. This was true of the destruction of Jerusalem and the end of the Jewish dispensation, for its influence was felt everywhere. "But ver. 27 points so unmistakably to the last days, also, that we understand this caution as referring to all teachers who assert that the kingdom of heaven is in a given locality, or in some narrow form, and who therefore set forth some contracted conception of the second Advent. The caution, then, is against enthusiasm, superstition, and fanaticism, in the days of the waiting Church."[4]

28. **For.** This word is omitted from the best manuscripts. **Wheresoever the carcase is**, etc. The carcase represents corruption, moral rottenness, ripe for dissolution, the condition when the cup of the people's iniquity was full. This is a picture and type of the condition of Jerusalem

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[1] Meyer. [2] Prof. H. B. Swete. [3] Lyman Abbott. [4] Prof. Philip Schaff in *Revision Com.*

29 ¶ Immediately But immediately, after *m* the tribulation of those days, *n* shall the sun the sun shall be darkened,
and the moon shall not give her light, and *o* the stars shall fall from heaven,
and the powers of the heavens shall be shaken:
30 And and then *p* shall appear *q* the sign of the Son of man in heaven: and then
r shall all the tribes of the earth mourn, and *s* they shall see the Son of man
coming in on the clouds of heaven *t* with power and great glory.

m ver. 21. *n* Isai. 13. 10 & 24. 23. Ezek. 32. 7. Joel 2. 10, 37 & 3. 15. Acts 2. 20. Cp. Amos 5. 20 & 8. 9 & Zeph. 1. 15 & Rev. 6. 12 & 8. 12. *o* Rev. 6. 13. Cp. Isai. 14. 12 & 34. 4. *p* Dan. 7. 13. *q* Cp. ver. 3. *r* Rev. 1. 7. Cp. Zech. 12. 12. *s* See ch. 16. 27. *t* ch. 26. 64. Mark 9. 1. Cp. ch. 25. 31.

and the Jewish nation at the time of their destruction. It is a type of many people, and of whole nations at different times, and such will be the case when the Son of man comes to judgment. **There will the eagles**, a general name for ravenous birds like the vulture, **be gathered together.** Canon Tristram gives the natural groundwork of this illustration, when speaking of the ravine between Jerusalem and Jericho near the place where the parable of the Good Samaritan is located. He says: —

"We gaze down, and see the ravens, eagles, and griffon vultures sailing beneath us. These are now the sole inhabitants of the caves, the monarchs of the waste, or, more strictly perhaps, the board of sanitary commissioners, a business which would be ill executed in this region were it not for the beneficent natural provision of the vulture, the raven, and other birds of prey." [1] The meaning is that wherever the moral condition of a people reaches a degree of corruption that may be typified by a dead body, the natural forces of God's universe, "the penal whirlwinds of heaven," are commissioned to remove that people from the earth lest it pollute and corrupt the rest of the human race. It is possible that there may be a reference to the eagles on the Roman standards gathered for the destruction of Jerusalem.

29. **Immediately after the tribulation of those days.** That is, immediately after the terrible events just described as accompanying the destruction of Jerusalem and the end of the old Dispensation; for what follows is to take place within the lifetime of some then living. But since that tribulation was typical of what will take place in later times, the description that follows applies also to what will occur immediately thereafter. It is as if Jesus had said, After the chaos, a new world is born; after the death throes of the old, the new kingdom of the Messiah shall appear before the world. The beginning of the new follows close on the end of the old. But it will be amid great social and political changes.

Shall the sun be darkened, . . . the moon . . . the stars. [2] That these are not literal but figurative expressions, metaphors, typical pictures of real occurrences, is plain from Acts 2: 16–20, where St. Peter applies the same expressions to his time, when no such literal physical signs appeared. Similar figurative poetical representations of great civil and social commotions are depicted in Isaiah 13: 10; 24: 23; 34: 4; Ezekiel 32: 7, 8; Joel 2: 10; 3: 15; Amos 8: 9; Micah 3: 6–8. They are the common imagery of Old Testament prophecy, applied to the destruction of Babylon by the Medes, to the judgment on Edom and Egypt, and on the nations in connection with the return of Judah from the Exile. Even the common speech of men describes a time of tribulation as one in which "the skies are dark" and "the sun of a nation's glory sets in gloom." These expressions of Christ may refer to the moral and spiritual conflicts, **the powers of the heavens . . . shaken**, the overthrow of false ideas and principles, and "spiritual wickedness in high places," "the principalities and powers" of "the rulers of the darkness of this world," "the prince of the power of the air." (See Eph. 6: 11, 12.) Luke adds that nations shall be "in perplexity for the roaring of the sea, and the billows," — vivid imagery of wild commotions among the people, political and social agitations, which always accompany the progress of the truth, and the coming of better times.

30. **Then shall appear the sign**, the indications, the signals, the appearances, **of the Son of man in heaven**, the moral and religious atmosphere. The commotion in the clouds and darkness are the signs that the light is working. The social upheavals are proofs that truth and

[1] *The Land of Israel*, chap. ix. p. 202.

"Aristotle notes how this bird scents its prey from afar, and congregates in the wake of an army. In the Russian war vast numbers were collected in the Crimea, and remained until the end of the campaign in the neighborhood of the camp, although previously scarcely known in the country." — *Prof. M. R. Vincent.*

[2] Both Tacitus and Josephus mention the portent that

"Fierce, fiery warriors fought upon the clouds,
In rank and squadron, and right form of war."

See *Julius Cæsar*, Act II., Scene 2.

31 And [u] he shall send forth his angels with a great sound of a [v] trumpet, and

u ch. 13. 41. *v* 1 Cor. 15. 52. 1 Thess. 4. 16.

the Gospel are living powers, and are doing their work. And that this is being done is apparent to all. **Then shall all the tribes of the earth mourn.** "In the interpretation of these words we may be guided chiefly by two other passages of Scripture: (1) the words of Zechariah (12 : 10–12), which no doubt occasioned their selection; and (2), those of St. John (Rev. 1 : 7), which may serve to show the sense in which they were understood by the beloved disciple. The evident allusion by St. John to the prophecy of Zechariah is sufficient to show that the *mourning* spoken of both here and in Rev. 1 : 7, is either identical with that foretold by the prophet, or at least is included under the prophecy as an antitype and second fulfilment of it. The resemblance between the three passages is far more complete in the Greek than in our version. Now, while there can be little doubt that the words as employed by St. John refer principally to the last judgment, the words of Zechariah (ver. 10) have a manifest reference to the prediction of Joel 2 : 28, which was primarily fulfilled on the Day of Pentecost. Hence we may regard the present passage as having a first fulfilment in relation to that earthly kingdom of Christ which was proclaimed on the Day of Pentecost, and more fully manifested after the destruction of Jerusalem. On both of those occasions there was a *mourning* on account of Christ: first a conscious mourning of the penitent for Him (Acts 2 : 37), afterwards a despairing sorrow of the impenitent over the destruction which their rejection of Him had brought upon them. The double meaning of the words πᾶσαι αἱ φυλαὶ τῆς γῆς gives the prophecy a twofold application: first to the judgment of *all the tribes of the land*, the Jewish people, at the coming of Christ in his earthly kingdom; and, secondly, to the judgment of *all the kindreds of the earth*, at the coming of Christ in his heavenly kingdom."[1] There may be added another interpretation; that all those people, of every kind, who are opposed to Christ, who are of earth, in contrast with heaven, whose business and customs and interest are opposed to the kingdom of Christ, will mourn over the progress of his kingdom, the success of which means ruin to their plans and interests.

They shall see the Son of man coming in the clouds of heaven, amid all this spiritual commotion and darkness and storm, **with power.** Only power could emerge from these commotions. Only power divine can bring the kingdom of God, and its coming will be with **great glory.** It was then, and will be in the last days, the most glorious, bright, beautiful event that ever shone upon this earth. "In Ps. 97 : 1–5 the reign of God has the same accompaniment of clouds, darkness, and fire. In Zech. 9 : 14 God himself is seen above the combatants, coming in the whirlwinds of the South. In Ps. 18 : 5–16, all the powers of nature are made to contribute to the pomp of Jehovah's coming. But the passage from which this language is taken is Dan. 7 : 13, in which one like a Son of man comes with the clouds of heaven, and the Ancient of Days gives him an everlasting and universal kingdom. . . . The point is that the clouds are not to be taken literally; they make a part of the picture, intended to represent that this kingdom to be set up on the earth is after all not an earthly kingdom, but one coming down out of heaven, a theocracy. Jesus then, in adopting this language, meant that this prophecy out of the Old Testament was to be fulfilled in himself at the time of the destruction of Jerusalem. . . . But what is there about this event that can be called a coming of the Son of man with power and great glory? The answer to this is to be found in the fact that Christ is said in the New Testament to have assumed the power at the right hand of God, and especially that the government of the world has been committed to him, . . . who rules not an earthly, but a heavenly throne."

"Matthew, in the account of the trial of Jesus before the Sanhedrim, uses a word which is decisive of the way in which the coming of the Son of man is to be taken. Jesus says (Matt. 26 : 64), *Henceforth*, (ἀπ' ἄρτι), *from this time on, you will see the Son of man seated on the right hand of Power and coming in the clouds of heaven.* This settles two things: first, that the coming is not a single event, any more than the sitting on the right hand of the Power; and second, that it was a thing which was to begin with the very time of our Lord's departure from the world. Moreover, the two things, the sitting on the right hand of the Power and the coming, are connected in such a way as to mean that he is to assume power in heaven and exercise it here in the world. The period beginning with the departure of Jesus from the world was to be marked by this assumption of heavenly power by the Christ, and by repeated interferences in crises of the world's history of which this destruction of Jerusalem was the first."[2]

31. **And he shall send his angels,** the invisible heavenly forces of various kinds, angelic

[1] Canon Cook, *Bible Commentary.*

[2] Prof. Ezra Gould, *Int. Crit. Com.* on Mark.

they [w] shall gather together [x] his elect from [y] the four winds, [z] from one end of heaven to the other.

32 Now learn a parable of the fig tree; When his branch from the fig tree learn her parable: when her is now yet become tender, and putteth forth its leaves, ye know that the summer is nigh:

33 So likewise ye, even so ye also, when ye shall see all these things, know ye that it he is near, nigh, *even* [a] at the doors.

34 [b] Verily I say unto you, This generation shall not pass away, till all these things be fulfilled, accomplished.

35 [c] Heaven and earth shall pass away, but [d] my words shall not pass away.

w Cp. ch. 23. 37 & 2 Thess. 2. 1. *x* ver. 22, 24. *y* Dan. 7. 2. Zech. 2. 6. Rev. 7. 1. *z* Deut. 4. 32 & 30. 4. *a* James 5. 9. Rev. 3. 20. *b* See ch. 16. 28. *c* Ps. 102. 26. Isai. 51. 6. 2 Pet. 3. 10. Cp. ch. 5. 18 & Heb. 12. 27. *d* Ps. 119. 89. Isai. 40. 8. 1 Pet. 1. 23, 25.

beings, spiritual influences, providential guidance; which bring men under the power of the Gospel, and which aid the work of the Church in building up Christian character, and proclaiming the news of salvation. **With a great sound of a trumpet**, with a call loud and strong enough to be heard by all in the world.[1] **And they shall gather together his elect**, his chosen ones, Christians, **from the four winds**, from all four points of the compass, **from one end of heaven to the other**, from horizon to horizon, from the whole broad earth. The first reference of this statement is to the beginning of the process of the formation of the church and the consolidation of the kingdom of God. After the destruction of Jerusalem, Christians would no longer be, or seem to be, in danger of becoming a mere appendage or sect of the Jewish church, but they were joined to the spiritual Church universal, having members in every land, under one head, Jesus Christ, governed by his principles, and working for his kingdom.

32. **Now learn a parable**, the lesson which the analogy of the fig-tree teaches. Fig-trees were abundant on Olivet, where the disciples were talking with Jesus; and it was springtime. **When his branch is yet tender**, better, "is now become tender," by the spring impulses swelling its buds; **and putteth forth its leaves, ye know that summer is nigh.** No one can question the sign, for it is the natural effect of summer, universally observed. There is special significance to this comparison, for it suggests new life after the barrenness of winter, new beauties, abundant fruit, progress, growth.

33. **So likewise ye, when ye shall see all these things**, which Christ had been describing in the previous verses as those which should precede his second coming. **Know ye that it**, the second coming, **is near.** The commotions were produced by the working of the kingdom of God upon a wicked world. They were the natural signs of that working, the visible proof of invisible forces. The battle was the sign of victory.

> "Happy he whose inward ear
> Angel comfortings can hear,
> O'er the rabble's laughter;
> And while Hatred's fagots burn,
> Glimpses through the smoke discern
> Of the good hereafter," [2]

34. **Verily I say unto you, This generation**, that time, the contemporaries of Jesus, the people then living.

That "this generation" has this meaning, and not that of "the Jewish race," or "the human race," is plain (1) because that is the natural meaning, and (2) because Jesus expressly said, "The Son of man shall come in the glory of the Father, with his angels," followed by the statement, "There be some standing here which shall not taste of death till they see the Son of man coming in his kingdom" (Matt. 16: 28).

35. **Heaven and earth**, the most substantial and enduring of material things, **shall pass away, but my words**, the truths I have been telling you, **shall not pass away.** No power in heaven or on earth can prevent their fulfilment.

NOTE (1) that this fulfilment was needed by the apostles and the early Christians. They needed to know that Jesus was alive after his death, that he was a king ruling on the earth, that the kingdom was coming. They could look at the signs pointed out by Christ and take courage.

[1] Emerson's motto at the Concord bridge speaks of the "embattled farmers" who "fired the shot heard round the world."

[2] Whittier, *Barclay of Ury*. See Mrs. Preston's *Poems*, "The Ideal and the Real."

Hon. Carroll D. Wright, of the Bureau of Labor at Washington, has lately made an address on "Is there any Solution of the Labor Problem?" According to the report, he said, "that there can be no solution; that progress, both social and industrial, is largely the result of labor struggles, and that a cessation of the labor struggle would result in social and industrial death."

36 ¶ But of that day and hour [e] knoweth no [man, no one,] not even the angels of heaven, [f] neither the Son, [g] but [my the] Father only.

e ch. 25. 13. 1 Thess. 5. 1, 2. f Cp. Phil. 2. 6, 7. g Cp. Zech. 14. 7 & Acts 1. 7.

It enabled them to understand the meaning of the great and terrible events which lay in the future. Instead of being discouraged, these things filled them with courage and patience and hope. They saw in them the signs of the coming of the kingdom, and the assurance of success. It was like a guide who should tell some travellers that at a certain point in their journey they would come to a dark tunnel full of strange noises and lurid flashes, like that valley which Bunyan's pilgrim once passed through. When they came to it they would know they were in the right way, and would come out safely into the light. They could see the silver lining behind the clouds. It was like the opening of Elisha's servant's eyes when they were besieged in Dothan.

> "There are who like the Seer of old
> Can see the helpers God has sent,
> And how Life's rugged mountain side
> Is white with many an angel tent."

It enabled them to know what to do in these times. They went right on with their work.

NOTE (2) that the early disciples were not mistaken, as so many think they were, in their constant expectation of the coming again of Christ. They could not know the manner of the coming, but in the fact they were not disappointed.

NOTE (3) this fulfilment of Jesus' prophecy does not exclude but implies a farther fulfilment in later days, as is foretold in many other scriptures. The fulfilment during that generation was real, was a fact. But it was not complete. The process is still going on, both among the Christians and among their enemies. Those who oppose will continue to oppose till their cup of iniquity is full. There will be a great conflict and destruction, as there was at Jerusalem, and there will be a final triumph of Christ, his religion, his principles. This is the coming the later apostles were expecting as the completion of that which appeared when the Old Dispensation passed away. This is what John meant when he prayed, "Lord Jesus, come quickly." It was not the judgment and the destruction of the world, but the *conversion of the world* they longed for, and for which we long and pray, saying, *Thy kingdom come.* The description concerning the earlier fulfilment, the destruction of those who refused to believe, and the salvation of those who believed, at the fall of Jerusalem and the end of the Old Dispensation, applies in each of its parts to the great consummation. "As tares are separated from the wheat, those incorrigible men who refused to share in the new sonship and fraternity would be removed, and thereafter the righteous were to shine like the sun in the kingdom of their Father (Matt. 13 : 43). . . . Men of persistent anti-filial and anti-fraternal disposition can never be made into loving brethren. Their removal is the only hope of a permanent and peaceful fraternity. . . . Whatever Jesus meant by the striking imagery with which he clothed this thought . . . it will mark the triumph of the new social order. . . . The world will, by virtue of man's endeavor and God's regenerating power, have been transformed into the kingdom. And the triumph of this new and perfected humanity, this eternal fraternity which he described and instituted and for which centuries have travailed, — this is the coming of the Lord." [1]

36. **But of that day and hour**, when Christ should come in his kingdom, **knoweth no man.** The exact time is uncertain. They could see the signs that the coming was near; but they could not know just when it would take place. It will come as the sun rises on a cloudy day; we cannot mark the moment of its rising, but at length we are conscious that it has risen. **No, not even the angels of heaven,** who would be likely to know much more than men. It was impossible that the disciples should understand even if Jesus had told them. No one can tell by experience and observation of the weather when winter ends and spring begins, or when summer ends and winter begins. An astronomer can tell by the heavens, but he cannot make us recognize it in the passing days. God knows times and seasons, but no man can tell when the great moral epochs begin and end. They "come without observation." Who can tell the day and the hour of the era of freedom, or of modern civilization, or "the new theology," or "the new education," or the Elizabethan age of literature, or of the dark ages, or any other great moral change? It is true of individuals as well as of communities, —

> "Oh, where is the sea?" the fishes cried,
> As they swam the crystal clearness through.
> "We 've heard from of old of the ocean's tide,
> And we long to look on the waters blue.
> The wise ones speak of the infinite sea;
> Oh, who can tell us if such there be?" [2]

[1] Prof. Shailer Mathews, *The Social Teaching of Jesus*, pp. 228, 229.

[2] For illustrative examples see Kidd's *Social Evolution*, p. 134; Lecky's *History of European Morals*, vol. i. p. 359. Other illustrations may be found in Green's *Short History of the English People*, where he shows how that

37 [h] But as *were* the days of No'e *were*, [i] so shall also the coming of the Son of man be.

38 [h] For as in those days that were before the flood they were eating and drinking, [j] marrying and giving in marriage, until [k] the day that No'e entered into the ark,

39 and they knew not until the flood came, and took them all away; [i] so shall also the coming of the Son of man be.

40 [l] Then shall two men be in the field; the one shall be taken, and the other one is left:

41 [m] Two *women* shall be grinding [n] at the mill; the one shall be taken, and the other one is left.

42 ¶ [o] Watch therefore: for ye know not on what hour day [p] your Lord doth come.

h Luke 17. 26, 27. *i* ver. 27. *j* ch. 22. 30. *k* Gen. 7. 7–16. *l* Luke 17. 36 (mg.). *m* Luke 17. 35. *n* Ex. 11. 5. Isai. 47. 2. *o* ch. 25. 13 & 26. 41. Mark 14. 34–38. Luke 12. 37 & 21. 36. Acts 20. 31. 1 Cor. 16. 13. 1 Thess. 5. 6. 1 Pet. 5. 8. Rev. 16. 15, *al.* *p* John 13. 13.

37–39. **But as the days of Noe, Noah, were,** etc. People would go on in their ordinary ways utterly unconscious of the overhanging doom, because they refused to see or to listen to the warnings of God's people, as the men in Noah's time, even the carpenters who helped to build the ark, refused to give heed to his warnings and example.

40, 41. **Then shall two be in the field.** Those who believe and those who do not shall in the interval be working side by side. **One shall be taken** (παραλαμβάνεται, *taken to one's side*), perhaps referring to John 14 : 3, taken to the Father's house where are the many mansions, or to 2 Thess. 4 : 17, caught up to meet the coming Lord. **The other left,** left on earth, left out of heaven, because he refused to believe the good news of salvation.

> "You may grind them both in the selfsame mill,
> You may bind them, heart and brow;
> But the poet will follow the rainbow still,
> And the other will follow the plow."

42. **Watch therefore,** because of the condition of things described in the previous part of the chapter. **Watch,** γρηγορεῖτε, derived from the perfect of ἐγείρω (to wake up), and hence, *to have been aroused from sleep, to be awake, alert.* The corresponding word in Mark 13 : 33 is derived from ἀγρεύω, (to hunt,) and ὕπνος, (sleep.) "The picture is of one *in pursuit of sleep*, and, therefore, *wakeful, restless.* It expresses not a mere act, but a state of wakefulness and watching. "What the Saviour enjoins is not curiosity straining to be the first to see the returning Master, such as Paul reproved in the Thessalonians (2 Thess. 3 : 10–12), but the wakefulness and diligence that overlooks no duty, indulges no indolence. The last thing that would please a master would be the idle curiosity which would make the servants neglect their work to stand outside the door gazing to catch a glimpse of his return. What the Master desires is wakeful work." [1]

Watch against temptation, watch against surprise, watch for opportunities to do good, watch for the coming of Christ and his kingdom. **Ye know not what hour.** The revised text has "*on what day, in what kind of a day*, whether a near or a remote one." [2] **Your Lord doth come.** The hour of his coming is kept secret because it is best for all that it should be so. A true foreknowledge of it was impossible to the disciples, for (1) they could not have understood the real nature of the fulfilment, and the misunderstanding would have brought continual troubles and mistakes; (2) it would have led to delays, to putting off duty till near the time of the coming, and thus the disciples would have missed the discipline and long preparation of character they needed.[3] "But with all the obscurity thus intentionally thrown around the day and the hour of Christ's coming, let us not forget that no obscurity, no uncertainty, hangs around the great event itself. In all that future which lies before us, these are the only two events of which we are absolutely certain: our own approaching death, our Lord's approaching advent." [4]

during the progress of the Wars of the Roses, to which historians give most attention, there was really going on out of sight among the common people a great development which revolutionized England. The same is true of Florence in the times of Dante and Savonarola. The visible conflicts were one thing; the real progress, scarcely noticed, was very different.

[1] Richard Glover.

[2] Prof. M. R. Vincent.

[3] Homer's *Odyssey* describes the hero Ulysses as falling asleep just before he reached his home, Ithaca, after a long voyage; and a sailor's loosing the winds of Æolus during his sleep was the means of driving him away to many long wanderings. See, also, the excellent little story, *Parley the Porter*, published as a tract.

[4] Hanna.

43 [q] But know this, that if the goodman / master of the house had known in what watch [r] the thief would come, / was coming, he would have watched, and would not have suffered his house to be [s] broken up. / through.

44 Therefore be ye also [t] ready: for in such an hour as / that ye think not [u] the Son of man cometh.

45 Who then is [v] a / the faithful and [w] wise servant, whom his lord hath made ruler / set over his household, to give them meat / their food in due season?

q For vers. 43–51, cp. Luke 12. 39–46. r Cp. 1 Thess. 5. 2 & 2 Pet. 3. 10 & Rev. 3. 3. s ch. 6. 19 (& mg. for mg.). t ch. 25. 10. u ver. 27. v ch. 25. 21. 1 Cor. 4. 2. Heb. 3. 5. w ch. 7. 24 & 10. 16 & 25. 2. Luke 16. 8. 1 Cor. 10. 15.

43. **If the goodman of the house**: the master or owner of the house. **Had known in what watch the thief would come**, or *was coming*. The night was divided into watches or periods, during each of which one division of the guards kept watch. It is said that our pocket timepieces are called watches because originally they measured the periods of watching. **He would have watched.** "In the East, which knows not the happy and secure municipal arrangements of Western lands, every one must be his own policeman. The state punishes, but leaves the prevention and detection of theft and robbery to the individual interested. Hence the watchman is a necessary and important personage everywhere. Not only in the vineyards, of the watch-towers of which mention has been made in a former note, but in the houses and villages, the watchman is needful."[1] **And would not have suffered**, etc. He took the ordinary precautions of bars and bolts. But he should have done more. **To be broken up**, or through. Literally, it is *to-be-dug-through*, a graphic word, appropriate to describe the action that would be required to get into a house whose walls consisted in a great measure of mud. "In Egypt and most of the towns of Palestine, at the present time, the houses are built, not of wood or stone, as we build them, but of mud more or less hardened by exposure to the sun, or of mud and pebbles mixed together."[2] The easiest way, therefore, and the most noiseless, for burglars to operate, was not to force the door, but, as it were, to delve or dig the walls.[3]

44. **Therefore.** For the same reason that the owner of a house would be prepared against robbers. **Be ye also ready.** Be always prepared, never be spiritually asleep, never be away from your place and duty. One cannot always watch his house; he must have times of sleep; but in spiritual things he can always be ready for the coming of his Lord. **For in such an hour as ye think not the Son of man cometh.** "For yourselves know perfectly that the day of the Lord so cometh as a thief in the night" (1 Thess. 5: 2; see, also, 2 Pet. 3: 10). The comings of the Lord are ever unexpected to us, — his coming at death, his coming to judge the world, his coming in the crises of our lives, his coming with opportunities and open doors, his coming with the power of the Holy Spirit. The only way is for us to be ever about our Master's business, ever doing his will, ever loving his presence, ever walking with God, and we shall be ready and glad when he comes. We are beset by perpetual temptations to sleep, to spiritual drowsiness and torpor. "An opium sky rains down soporifics." The last thing we should have is a sleepy religion.

"Once to every man and nation comes the moment to decide,
In the strife of Truth with Falsehood, for the good or evil side;
Some great cause, God's new Messiah, offering each the bloom or blight,
Parts the goats upon the left hand, and the sheep upon the right,
And the choice goes on forever 'twixt that darkness and that light."

"Hast thou chosen, O my people, on whose party thou shalt stand,
Ere the Doom from its worn sandals shakes the dust against our land?"[4]

45. **Who then is a faithful and wise servant**, or steward, "who was generally a slave whom his master had chosen on account of his trustworthiness and intelligence to be the steward of his estate."[5] **Whom his lord hath made ruler over his household**, while he himself went abroad. This power was conferred on account of previous faithfulness and ability. **To give them meat**, food, at regular hours. He is prompt in his duties. The object of God in giving men talent or power is that they may minister to others. "*Who?* it is the servant who attends to his duties, every day and every hour, just as he would do if he

[1] Canon Tristram.
[2] Horatio B. Hackett, *Illustrations of Scripture*, p. 59.
[3] Morison.
[4] James Russell Lowell.
[5] Prof. Carr.

46 [x] Blessed [is] is that servant, whom his lord when he cometh shall find so doing.

47 Verily I say unto you, That that he [y] shall make will set him ruler over all his goods. that he hath.

48 But and if that evil servant shall say in his heart, My lord [z] delayeth his coming; tarrieth;

49 And and shall begin to smite *his* fellowservants, beat his fellow-servants, and to shall eat and drink with [a] the drunken;

50 The the lord of that servant shall come [b] in a day when he looketh expecteth not, for *him*, and in an hour that when he is not aware of, knoweth not,

51 And and shall cut him asunder, and appoint *him* his portion with the hypocrites: [c] there shall be the weeping and gnashing of teeth.

x John 13. 17. Rev. 16. 15. *y* ch. 25. 21, 23. *z* ch. 25. 5. *a* 1 Thess. 5. 7. *b* 2 Pet. 3. 12. Cp. ch. 25. 13. *c* See ch. 8. 12.

knew that his lord would return that very day, or in that very hour. He only is *faithful* to his lord. He only is *prudent* and *wise* for himself."[1]

46. **Blessed.** He possesses the beatitudes. **Shall find so doing.** We see by this illustration of Christ what he means by watching, not gazing up into the heaven for signs, but faithful performance of duty, with hope and joy in the thought of his coming. We are to be wide awake in his service, with eyes open to the signs of the times, and to every new opening and possibility. We are to be on our guard against every wile of the devil, every insidious attack, every fierce temptation; chiefly by faithfulness, and discipline, and love, and all the fruits of the Spirit, which become like a fortress wall of defence.

47. **Shall make him ruler** (or *set him*) **over all his goods**, over all his property of every kind, and not simply over his body of domestics. (Compare 25: 21; Luke 19: 17, 26.) "Our Lord here puts honor upon those who serve him by comparing them, not to a menial or ordinary slave, but to the intelligent, faithful, and trusted head slave of the household, like Joseph, in Potiphar's house."[2] "That promotion shall not be like earthly promotion, wherein the eminence of one excludes that of another, — but rather like the diffusion of love, in which, the more each has, the more there is for all."[3]

The reward is both outward and inward, — more glories, and blessings, and joys, and larger capacities for usefulness and enjoyment. Larger fields and wider spheres are given, greater opportunities for doing good, and a clearer perception of God, a fuller reception of all that makes heaven what it is. The reward is like imparting a new sense. We live in the universe like one born blind. The blind man enjoys many things; he feels the warmth of the sunshine, but the exquisite glories of color in flower and forest, the splendor of the sky, the infinite reach of sight, are unknown till his eyes are opened. Then, while in the same place and surrounded by the same things as before, he has entered a new world. There are many such spheres around us, one beyond the other, each one more glorious than the one within. Some are opened at conversion, others by various Christian experiences, and still there is more to follow. And the only way to have our eyes opened to them is by faithfulness in the lesser sphere. To him that hath shall be given.

48. **If that evil servant shall say in his heart.** He would be ashamed to say it openly. Many an evil lurks in the heart which would appall us if spoken. But the wickedness of the heart soon manifests itself in the conduct. **My lord delayeth his coming.** And so will have no knowledge of his servant's conduct.

49. **And shall begin to smite his fellowservants.** "Not only neglecting their interests, but actually abusing them in the spirit of a petty tyrant."[1] These were the faithful servants, and they were abused because they were faithful. **And to eat and drink with the drunken.** Carousing at his master's expense, instead of keeping the household in order, and exercising a prudent economy.[2] "So the unfaithful minister or Christian takes the very means God has put in his hands for the aid of his cause, and the blessing of men, and misappropriates them to selfish uses. The two forms of sin most common to those in high places are oppression and self-indulgence."[4] Tyranny over others goes hand in hand with laxity toward ourselves. Persecution of others implies a wrong in us. "The great historical contrast between the Inquisition and Indulgences will easily occur to the reader."[5]

50. **The lord . . . shall come.** Not expecting his coming will not prevent his coming. **In a day when he looketh not for him.** For he is looking elsewhere, and his interest is absorbed in other things.

51. **Cut him asunder.** Execute him swiftly,

[1] Morison. [2] Prof. Broadus. [3] Dean Alford. [4] Lyman Abbott. [5] Lange.

as would be the usual method of an earthly king in those days. What the divine Judge does is to mete out righteous punishment. **And appoint him his portion with the hypocrites.** He must go with the hypocrites because he is one.[1] Pretending to be a servant of God, he has been all the time serving the devil. He must go to his own place. If such a character were taken to the place called heaven, he would carry hell with him, and make it a hell for others. **There shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth.** "This is a phrase often used to denote the bitterest agony and convulsions of pain and rage." The bitterest sting of the punishment is that he brought it upon himself. "These monsters with two faces and one black heart cannot be tolerated in the universe of God."[2]

[1] Compare Dante's *Inferno*. In the eighth circle and fifth pit Dante saw the hypocrites. [2] J. Monro Gibson, D. D.

CHAPTER 25.

PRIVATE DISCOURSES OF JESUS WITH HIS DISCIPLES IMMEDIATELY AFTER THE CLOSE OF HIS PUBLIC MINISTRY (*continued*).

Tuesday Afternoon, April 4.

SECTION XXI. — THREE PARABLES, CONCERNING PREPARATION FOR THE LAST DAYS.

1. THE TEN VIRGINS, vers. 1–13.
2. THE TALENTS, vers. 14–30.
3. THE JUDGMENT, vers. 31–46.

Place.

Spoken on Mount Olivet, overlooking Jerusalem.

1 THEN shall the kingdom of heaven be likened unto [d] ten virgins, which took their lamps, and went forth to meet [e] the bridegroom.
2 And five of them were [w] wise, foolish, and five *were* foolish. were wise.

d Luke 19. 13. *e* ch. 9. 15. John 3. 29. Rev. 19. 7 & 21. 2, 9. *w* ch. 7. 24 & 10. 16 & 25. 2. Luke 16. 8. 1 Cor. 10. 15.

I. THE TEN VIRGINS: A PARABLE ABOUT WATCHING, vers. 1–13.

"This is one of the most beautiful and touching of the parables. Poetry, painting, and the drama have combined to give it an exceptional hold on the Christian imagination. The weird pathos of the story is unspeakable. The occasion is so happy, the agents so interesting, the issue so tragic."[1]

1. **Then**, at the time of the coming of the Lord (see the last chapter), **shall the kingdom of heaven be likened unto ten virgins.** The condition of things at that time, and the duties and dangers connected with it, are represented and illustrated by the following parable, which applies both to the coming completed at the destruction of Jerusalem, and especially to the final coming at the end of the world.

THE TEN VIRGINS represent all who claim to belong to the kingdom of heaven.

THE WEDDING FEAST represents (1) salvation from destruction and death; and (2) all the blessings of the Gospel, which are bestowed upon true disciples, feasting every faculty of the soul; a feast, rich, abundant, varied, exquisitely delightful, social, strengthening. "They eat, they drink, and in communion sweet quaff immortality and joy."[2] "Rich and rare the food provided for the guests in the great banqueting hall of immortality."[3]

THE BRIDEGROOM is Jesus Christ himself, who loves the bride with a heavenly love.

THE BRIDE is the Church, the new Jerusalem descending out of heaven from God (Rev. 21 : 2, 9, 10), with whom the bridegroom shall dwell forever (Rev. 21 : 2; comp. Isai. 62 : 4, 5; Hos. 2 : 19).

2. **Five of them were wise, and five were foolish.** There is no significance in the number, nor in the fact that the wise numbered the same as the foolish. The wise represent true disciples, those who from the heart believe and obey, and live righteous lives. The foolish represent (1) the Jews who professed to belong to the kingdom of heaven, but did not live heavenly lives;

[1] Prof. A. B. Bruce, *Parabolic Teaching of Christ*. [2] Milton. [3] Hanna.

3 They that *were* foolish For the foolish, when they took their lamps, and took no oil with them:
4 But but the wise took oil in their vessels with their lamps.
5 While Now while the bridegroom *f* tarried, they all slumbered and slept.
6 And But *g* at midnight there was is a cry, made, Behold, the bridegroom; cometh; go Come ye out forth to meet him.

f ch. 24. 48. Cp. ver. 19 & Heb. 10. 37 & 2 Pet. 3. 4, 9. *g* Mark 13. 35.

and (2) those who at the time of Christ's final coming have been living in Christian lands, under Christian influences, but are not Christians at heart.

3. **They that were foolish took their lamps.** The lamp consisted of a hollow cup with an opening for the oil and another for the wick. This was fastened on a long wooden pole, and carried like a torch. "In the utterly dark streets of an Asiatic city every one who goes forth at night is expected, and in modern Jerusalem is strictly required by the authorities, to carry a light." [1]

The Lamp signifies the outward profession. They had some light, they had religious feelings, they were moved by the influences of the Holy Spirit. It was a matter of impulse and surface feeling, like the seed sown on rocky soil, which sprang up quickly and endured till persecution or trouble arose (Matt. 13: 5, 6, 20, 21). **Took no oil with them** in addition to what they had in their lamps. Had no deep and lasting principle wrought into character. Their heart was not changed.

The Oil is the spiritual life, the heart, which is the source of the flame, the visible manifestations of the Christian spirit. And as these are created and supported by the Holy Spirit, his influences are also typified by the oil.

4. **Took oil in their vessels.** The point of this in the parable is that these virgins were *watching* in the only way they could watch, by making full preparations for what was coming. Watching for death is not being continually anxious and on the lookout, but being all one's life prepared for the great change, by life and character, and serving one's Lord. Lyman Abbott well says, "Not what death *finds us doing*, but how death *finds us furnished* is the important question." Apparently the virgins assembled at some house on the route of the procession, as Dr. Trumbull was in a tent outside the castle walls when he waited to see the bridegroom come to the castle with his torchlight procession.[2]

5. **While the bridegroom tarried.** "When the wedding day arrived the bride put on white robes, often richly embroidered, decked herself with jewels, fastened the indispensable bridal girdle about her waist, covered herself with a veil, and placed a garland on her head. The bridegroom, arrayed in his best attire, set out from his home for the house of the bride's parents, attended by friends, accompanied by musicians and singers; and, if the procession moved at night, by persons bearing torches. Having received the bride from her parents, he conducted the whole party back to his own or his father's house with song, music, and dancing. On the way back they were joined by the maiden friends of the bride and groom." [3] "When the bridegroom's house was reached, the procession entered, including the invited guests; the door was then closed, and no one arriving subsequently was permitted to enter." [4] Then followed the marriage ceremony and the wedding feast. **They all slumbered,** became drowsy, **and slept.** They rested in quiet peace. They had no anxiety; the wise, because they had faith and were prepared; the foolish, by false security and by ignoring the future. It means, in its applications to us, the attending to every-day duties in the spirit of love to God and man, without anxiety or restlessness.

6. **At midnight.** The coming was late and unexpected. **There was a cry made.** Either the cry of heralds, as was sometimes the custom, or the noise of the approaching crowds with shouts and snatches of song and the flash of the torches. "The women sounded those peculiar shrill, quavering cries of joy, called Zugâret, which are heard throughout the East on occasions of special rejoicing. (See Rev. 19: 6–9.)" "Our Hallelujah is merely the Western method of sounding the Eastern Zugâret." [2]

Dr. Trumbull, attending an Oriental wedding at Castle Nakhl in the Arabian Desert, saw the bride's procession in the afternoon. He was told that the bridegroom's procession would move out later in the evening. He watched for it several hours, and seeing no sign thereof he went quietly to bed in his tent. But *at midnight there was a cry made*, **Behold, the bridegroom cometh; go ye out to meet him.** This was literally the substance of his dragoman's call.[2]

[1] Prof. Broadus.
[2] Dr. Trumbull's *Studies in Oriental Social Life*, "Betrothals and Weddings."
[3] Prof. John D. Davis, *Bible Dictionary*.
[4] Lyman Abbott.

7 Then all those virgins arose, and [h] trimmed their lamps.
8 And the foolish said unto the wise, Give us of your oil; for our lamps are gone out.
9 But the wise answered, saying, *Not so:* lest peradventure there will not be enough for us and you: but go ye rather to them that sell, and buy for yourselves.

h Cp. Luke 12. 35.

The Coming of the Bridegroom. "This parable will obtain a wider application if we keep in memory that while it is quite true that there is one great coming of the Lord at the last, yet not the less does he come in all the great crises of his Church, at each new manifestation of his Spirit; and at each of these, too, there is a separation, among those who are called by his name, into wise and foolish, as they are spiritually alive or dead. Thus at Pentecost, when by his Spirit he returned to his Church, he came: the prudent in Israel went in with him to the feast; the foolish tarried without. Thus, too, he came at the Reformation. Each of these was an example of what shall be more signally fulfilled at the end." [1] It was also true, and had a special application to the disciples, when Jesus came at the time of the destruction of Jerusalem. So also he comes to us at every great crisis of our lives: at the opening of some great opportunity, in the hour of great trouble, in the hour of death.

7. **Trimmed their lamps**, which had been kept burning. They needed trimming and replenishing. Every one needs some special preparation for every great crisis. No matter how well one is prepared, he cannot even make a good address without some special preparation. No matter how good a soldier one is, he cannot go to war without special attention to his equipment. "It is in moments of surprise that a man's true self comes out to view. Nothing will more correctly reveal what is in a man than the coming upon him of some crushing and unlooked-for crisis (as peril of army to general, or storm to mariner, affliction, commercial crisis). It was a shrewd remark of Andrew Fuller that a man has only as much religion as he can command in trial. In mercy the minor surprises have been sent to show ourselves to us before the last and greatest one." [2]

8. **Give us of your oil; for our lamps are gone out.** Rather, as in the R. V., "are going out," for want of oil. Their religion of excitement, their religion of forms and ceremonies, their faith without works, their surface resolves, their good intentions without deep principle, their religion that did not flow out from a deep fountain of love and consecration, that was not inwrought into their life and character, failed them in their time of need.

9. **Not so; lest there be not enough for us and you.** "The reply is not selfish, even in the figure, for there was not *enough for us and you.* To have divided the oil would have entirely defeated the purpose of the procession." [3] This belonged to the form of the parable. In real life the fact is the same, but for different reasons. However sorry the wise are for the foolish, it is impossible to supply their needs by a transference of qualities and character. "In the house of a well-known citizen of Boston there is an exquisite group in marble representing the wise and foolish virgins. The wise is kneeling, in the act of trimming her lamp; and the foolish, with a face full of the most pathetic entreaty, seems begging from her a share of the oil which she is pouring in to feed the flame; but her sister, with a look of inexpressible sadness, and her hand uplifted as if to guard her treasure, is as if she were saying, '*Not so.*' It is a touching rendering of the parable; and as I looked at it I was not surprised to be told that a famous New England essayist had said as he was gazing at it, 'She should have given her the oil.' Who has not often sympathized with that feeling as he read the parable? We are apt to think that the five sisters were just a little stingy. But the owner of the group said to the man of genius, 'If you and your neighbor have each signed a bill for a certain sum to fall due on a certain date, and you by dint of economy and perseverance have been able to lay by just enough to meet your own obligation, while your neighbor, wasting his hours on trifles, has made no provision for the day of settlement; and if, on the morning when the bills fall due, he should come beseeching you to give him some of your money to help him pay his debt, would you give it to him?'" [2]

"Personal character cannot be given by one man to another. You cannot give me your patience to support me in the hour of my anguish. I cannot give you my courage for the discharge of dangerous duty. There is much, indeed, we can and ought to do for one another. But we cannot give to any one the qualities which we ourselves possess, but in which he is deficient." [2]

[1] Arbp. Trench, *The Parables.*
[2] Wm. M. Taylor, *The Parables.*
[3] Prof. Schaff, in *Revision Com.*

10 And while they went away to buy, the bridegroom came; and [i] they that were ready went in with him to [j] the marriage feast: and [k] the door was shut.
11 Afterward came also the other virgins, saying, [l] Lord, Lord, open to us.
12 [l] But he answered and said, Verily I say unto you, [m] I know you not.

i ch. 24. 44. *j* ch. 22. 2. *k* For vers. 10. 12, cp. Luke 13. 25–27. *l* Cp. ch. 7. 22, 23. *m* ch. 10. 33. Cp. 2 Tim. 2. 19.

Go . . . to them that sell, and buy. That is, as applied to us, go to the means of grace, to the sources whence character and principle can be gained, to the Holy Spirit, to the Scriptures.

10. **And while they went to buy, the bridegroom came.** Usually we cannot prepare for the testing times of life at the moment. When the opportunity to rule the "ten cities" comes, we are not prepared to do it, unless we have faithfully used the "ten talents." When the great work of our lives comes to us, we shall fail, unless our past life has been preparing us for it. The deathbed is the poorest time for repentance, and *the oil must be stored up long before that feeds our lamps in these crises of our lives.* We cannot go at the last hour and buy.

> "There is a tide in the affairs of men,
> Which, taken at the flood, leads on to fortune;
> Omitted, all the voyage of their life
> Is bound in shallows and in miseries." [1]

They that were ready went in. Such only can go in by the necessity of the case. **And the door was shut.** As was the custom, in order to give security and peace to those within, and to keep out intruders who had no right to enter. "At a marriage, the procession of which I saw some years ago, the bridegroom came from a distance, and the bride lived at Serampore, to which place the bridegroom was to come by water. After waiting two or three hours, at length, near midnight, it was announced, as if in the very words of Scripture, *Behold, the bridegroom cometh, go ye out to meet him.* All the persons employed now lighted their lamps, and ran with them in their hands, to fill up their stations in the procession. Some of them had lost their lights, and were unprepared; but it was then too late to seek them, and the cavalcade moved forward to the house of the bride, at which place the company entered a large and splendidly illuminated area before the house, covered with an awning, where a great multitude of friends, dressed in their best apparel, were seated upon mats. The bridegroom was carried in the arms of a friend, and placed upon a superb seat in the midst of the company, where he sat a short time, and then went into the house, the door of which was immediately shut, and guarded by Sepoys. I and others expostulated with the doorkeepers, but in vain. Never was I so struck with our Lord's beautiful parable as at this moment: *and the door was shut.* I was exceedingly anxious to be present while the marriage formulas were repeated, but was obliged to depart in disappointment." [2]

The Door was shut. (See Rev. 21 : 27; 22 : 14, 15.) (1) There are abundant opportunities and pressing invitations to enter the kingdom. (2) There comes a time when it is too late to enter. (3) This is a fact of nature, as well as a truth of the Word. There is a tendency to fix the character, so that one will not change. In the misuse of the body there comes a time when it is impossible to ward off disease. (4) We shut the door against ourselves. No one but ourselves is to blame for our not entering. (5) We shut the door by neglecting to be prepared to enter.

11. **Afterward came . . . the other virgins.** As Esau came too late for the blessing, which no tears could give him.

12. **I know you not.** I do not recognize you as belonging to the procession and to the guests. In the application of the parable this means that they were not fitted to enter the kingdom of heaven and to enjoy its blessings because they had refused to use the divine helps for cultivating the character by which alone any one could enter.[3]

Too Late. Tennyson's *Idylls of the King* contains a solemn and effective poem, a song sung to Queen Guinevere, based on the foolish virgins: —

> "Late, late, so late! and dark the night, and chill!
> Late, late, so late! but we can enter still.
> Too late, too late! ye cannot enter now."

> "To-morrow, and to-morrow, and to-morrow,
> Creeps in this petty pace from day to day,
> To the last syllable of recorded time;
> And all our yesterdays have lighted fools
> The way to dusty death." [4]

[1] Shakespeare.

[2] W. Ward, *View of the History, Literature, and Mythology of the Hindoos.*

[3] Compare the story of the sibyl's offer to sell the nine books to King Tarquin at Rome; Southey's poem, *The Inchcape Rock;* and that most touching story in the booklet *The Sister's Dream of Heaven.* J. R. Miller, in *Making the Most of Life,* has an interesting description of a painting called "Opportunities."

[4] Shakespeare, *Macbeth.* See in Ovid's *Metamorphoses*

13 [n] Watch therefore, for ye [o] know [neither not] the day nor the hour [wherein the Son of man cometh].

14 ¶ [p] For [q] *the kingdom of heaven is* [r] as a man travelling into a far *it is* as *when* a man, going into another country, [who] called his own servants, and delivered unto them his goods.

15 And unto one he gave five [s] talents, to another two, [and] to another one; [t] to [every man each] according to his several ability; and [r] straightway [straightway took he went on] his journey.

n ch. 24. 42. *o* Cp. ch. 24. 50. *p* For vers. 14–30, cp. Luke 19. 12–27. *q* Cp. Mark 13. 34. *r* ch. 21. 33. *s* ch. 18. 24. *t* Cp. Rom. 12. 6 & 1 Cor. 12. 11 & Eph. 4. 7 & 1 Pet. 4. 10.

13. **Watch therefore.** See on 24: 42–51. We watch by serving the Lord as faithfully as if he were ever looking upon us. We watch by being on our guard against every temptation and danger. Watchfulness is the opposite of careless security; it is a state of readiness. The watcher is ever on guard, like the lookout on a ship, or the outposts of an army.

A Scripture Treasure Chamber on Watching. Deut. 4 : 9; Prov. 4 : 23–26; Matt. 24: 42–51; 25 : 13; 26 : 40, 41; Rom. 13 : 11; 1 Cor. 10 : 12; 16 : 13; Eph. 6 : 13, 18; 1 Thess. 5: 4, 6; Rev. 3 : 2, 3; 16 : 15.

II. THE TALENTS: A PARABLE ABOUT FAITHFULNESS, vers. 14–30.

This parable shines clearest in the light of the circumstances. Jesus and his disciples are still on Olivet, overlooking Jerusalem and the Temple in all their glory. Jesus had foretold their destruction. What was the cause of that ruin? Because the nation had buried the talent God had entrusted to them, instead of using it for him. The parable lay in full view before the disciples' eyes. What the city then was, multiplied into the new Jerusalem of the Revelation, could have been theirs evermore by faithful use of the divinely entrusted talents. The loss of all, "the outer darkness," "the weeping and gnashing of teeth," as the fruit of unfaithfulness, lay in the prophetic vision shown by Christ. It was still a lesson about watching, but the emphasis was laid on *active service* for God. It was a preparation of the disciples for the great and important duties that lay before them.

14. **For the kingdom of heaven.** This is not in the original, but is naturally supplied from ver. 1, since the same subject is continued under another illustration. **Is as a man travelling into a far country.** He was going abroad, and therefore had to leave his affairs in competent hands.

The Householder represents Jesus Christ, who was about to leave his disciples and go to heaven, which was a *far country* in the sense that his servants could not have visible communication with him.

Who called his own servants. These upper servants, or slaves, were to a large landholder what the under officers of a government are to the king. The slaves of the Greeks and Romans were often men of varied mental attainments or considerable manual skill; and such of them as were clever artisans, efficient doctors, or ready amanuenses would command high prices.[1] Such "were allowed to engage freely in business, paying, as it was frequently arranged, a fixed yearly sum to their master; or, as here, they had money given to them wherewith to trade on his account, or with which to enlarge their business, and to bring him in a share of their profits."[2]

The Servants denote all those to whom the interests of the kingdom of heaven were entrusted. The Jewish rulers are among those represented by the man with one talent, for they looked upon the kingdom of God placed in their charge as a matter of small account compared with their own selfish interests. The Apostles and early Christian leaders received some five talents, some two, some one; and so do all Christ's professed followers, and all who have received from Christ the privileges and blessings of his Gospel. The principle applies to all men, for all have been entrusted by God with many things. **And delivered unto them his goods,** his property, his capital available for trading purposes.

15. **And unto one he gave five talents.** A talent was 3000 shekels, and as the weight of the Jewish shekel is variously estimated, there is considerable variation in the value given to the talent, which was doubtless a weight of silver, from $1000 to $2000, with no clear statement as to the reason for the difference, and seeming contradictions in the same article in a late Bible Dictionary.

"A talent = 60 minæ (the pounds of Luke 19) = 3000 shekels = 4 × 3000 = 12,000 drachmæ or denarii at 16.2 cts. = $1944."

the fable of Mercury putting to sleep the hundred-eyed Argus. *Suggestive Illustrations on Matthew*, "The Land of Pretty Soon," and "A Picture of Opportunity." *Suggestive Illustrations on Acts*, "The House of Never, The Doomed Man."

[1] See Smith's *Dict. of Greek and Roman Antiquities.*

[2] Trench.

16 Then straightway he that had received the five talents went and traded with the same, them, and made them other five talents.

17 And likewise in like manner he also that had *received* the two' he also gained other two.

"A talent = 60 minæ = 6000 denarii at 16.2 cts. = $972."

The fact is that there were two kinds of shekels used in trade, called *the heavy shekel* and *the light*

Shekel of Simon Maccabæus = 4 denarii.

shekel, of which the heavy weighed just twice as much as the light.[1] There were still other variations; exactly as we have different pounds and ounces for silver and for merchandise; different quantities in a quart of different liquids, and in our early history had different values for "a shilling."

The Talents represent the powers and means God has entrusted to his people for carrying on

Silver Denarius of Tiberius.

his work. They are the "gifts" Paul enumerates in 1 Cor. 12. Among these talents are the Gospel itself, the truths Christ preached, training, energy, education, skill, Christian experience, health, wealth, time, opportunities, power of preaching and teaching, all the gifts and endowments of the Holy Spirit. The Day of Pentecost was one special season of distributing the talents. Dr. Bushnell says that the capacity of religion — of knowing God, of love, of faith, of being illuminated and guided by God — is the highest talent we have, because without this all other talents fall into a stunted and partially disabled state, and because "all the greatest things ever done in the world have been done by the instigations and holy elevations of the religious capacity." **To every man according to his several ability.** "The natural gifts are as the vessel, which may be large or small and which receives according to its capacity; but which in each case is *filled*."[2] **Took his journey** into a far country. Representing Christ as leaving the earth in his bodily presence, and sitting on the right hand of his Father in heaven. This put them on their guard against disappointment at the long delay, for they had "supposed that the kingdom of God was immediately to appear" (Luke 19: 11).

The Man with Five Talents. 16. **Then.** The *straightway* of the last verse belongs at the beginning of this, — *straightway he went.* It thus teaches the great lesson of urgency and promptitude. It says to us, The demands of the kingdom are very pressing; to be prompt in action is a cardinal virtue in the kingdom. **He that had received the five talents**, between $9000 and $10,000. **Traded with the same.** Literally, *worked;* then in a technical sense, *engaged in business*, and so *traded*. The men who conduct large business operations have to work indeed. Brain work is often far more intense and severe than hand work.[3]

The Trading is the wise and earnest use of all the talents God has entrusted to us, in accomplishing his work and aiding the progress of his kingdom.

Increasing Spiritual Capital. **And made them other five talents.** Omit the *them*. He gained five talents. In an honest business way he doubled his capital. In all true bargains the other side gains as well. A good bargain is one that is good for both parties. Both the capacity and the entrusted talents are increased by proper use. God gives larger opportunities, fuller measures of the Spirit, more important work, new spheres of action, to those who have increased their ability to use them.

Opportunities that come to us are unnoticed or unattainable, unless we have been faithfully growing into a power to use them. What is an opportunity to sing, or to be a sea captain, or to open a large business, to one who has acquired no fitness for those things? All the falling apples in the world would not have suggested to Newton the law of gravitation, nor would all the steaming teakettles in England have awakened in Watt the idea of the steam-engine, if they had not been prepared by previous faithful study and work.

17. **Likewise he that had received two**, nearly $4000. He also doubled his capital.

[1] See article on "Money" in Hastings' *Dictionary of the Bible.*

[2] Trench.

[3] Prof. Broadus.

18 But he that [had] received [the] one went [away] and [u] digged in the earth, and hid his lord's money.

19 [v] [Now after] After a long time the lord of those servants cometh, and [w] [maketh a reckoning] reckoneth with them.

20 And [so] he that [had] received [the] five talents came and brought other five talents, saying, Lord, thou deliveredst unto me five talents: [behold,] lo, I have gained [beside them] other five talents. [more.]

21 His lord said unto him, Well done, [thou] good and [x] faithful servant: [y] thou hast been faithful over a few things, [z] I will [make] set thee [ruler] over many things: enter thou into [a] the joy of thy lord.

u Cp. ch. 13. 44. *v* Cp. ver. 5. *w* ch. 18. 23. Rom. 14. 12. Cp. Luke 16. 2. *x* ver. 23. ch. 24. 45. *y* Luke 16. 10. 1 Cor. 4. 2. Cp. 1 Tim. 3. 13. *z* ch. 24. 47. *a* Heb. 12. 2. Cp. Isai. 53. 11 & John 15. 11.

18. **But he that had received one went and digged in the earth.** Hiding treasure in the ground was a very common plan for safe-keeping, in a land where there were few banks or places of deposit. For further light on this custom, see under ch. 13 : 44.[1] The talent is buried by neglect to use it, possibly from a morbid fear of making mistakes, possibly from that vanity which is unwilling to do anything unless it is great or showy. He would keep it safe, but forgot the moth and rust. Trench refers to those who, in the early church, pleaded that they had enough to do for their own souls, and were afraid of losing them in trying to save others; and so, instead of being the salt of the earth, thought rather of keeping their own saltness, by withdrawing sometimes into caves and wildernesses, from all those active ministries of love by which they might have served their brethren.

19. **After a long time.** Long in the history of the whole church, and long enough in the case of individuals, to allow them to make good use of the trust. The Jews had been long entrusted with the affairs of the kingdom of heaven. To the Apostles it seemed long before the Lord returned; and for centuries the people of God have been waiting for the final coming. **And reckoneth with them,** has a settlement. They are to report what they have done with the talents entrusted to them. It is THE DAY OF JUDGMENT, such as is described in the latter part of the chapter.

FIRST REWARD. 20. **He that had received five talents . . . brought other five talents.** He had doubled his spiritual capital. He was twice the man he was before. He had twice as much of the same things as were first entrusted to him.

Every additional gift or virtue or talent in a man is not merely so much added to him, but is a multiplier, for it increases the value of each and every other gift. A diamond of the first water of 1 carat weight is worth $100. Add another carat, and the value of the 2 carat diamond is $300. Add 9 carats, and the 10 carat diamond is worth $11,000, or the 1 carat diamond multiplied 110 times. So it is with the talents God entrusts to men. Add common sense to genius, and the man is multiplied many fold. Add to these consecration, zeal, grace, and love, and you multiply him many fold more. One note is a sound; add a score or two more, and you have an anthem. One color, no matter how beautiful, is monotonous; add other colors, and you have a cathedral window. Such is the wonderful reward of the man who adds five more to his five talents, or two more to his two, or one more to his one.

SECOND REWARD. 21. **His lord said unto him, Well done, thou good and faithful servant.** He had his lord's approval. Faithfulness, not success, nor the amount gained, was rewarded. God will say *Well done* only to those who have done well. There are no empty compliments in the Day of Judgment. "That glad light falling from the heavenly shore hath lent a radiance to man's thought and labor and trials and hopes here. Handel tells us that when he wrote the 'Hallelujah Chorus' he saw the heavens opened and all the angels and the great God himself!" A modest man of moderate ability said that he could not expect God's *Well done*, but he did expect that he would say, *Well tried; Well attempted.*

THIRD REWARD. **Thou hast been faithful over a few things, I will make thee ruler over many things.** I will give thee a larger sphere of usefulness. This would have been true of the Jewish nation had they accepted Jesus as the Messiah. It was true of the Apostles and early leaders of the Christian Church. They not only greatly increased in power and usefulness, but

[1] See Prof. Thomson's *The Parables and Their Home*, on the parable of the Hid Treasure.

22 He / And he also that had received / received the two talents came and said, Lord, thou deliveredst unto me two talents: behold, / lo, I have gained two other / other two talents. beside them.

23 His lord said unto him, Well done, good and faithful servant; thou hast been faithful over a few things, I will make / set thee ruler over many things: enter thou into the joy of thy lord.

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they have had the privilege of blessing the whole world, — through the Gospels they wrote, through the history of their lives, and through the growth of the little plant they nurtured in its feebleness till it has become a great tree overshadowing the earth.

Upon all the faithful, even in this world, this same reward is bestowed, a larger sphere of usefulness and responsibility, increased power, greater influence. All the joys of imparting good, of helping others, are multiplied. We constantly see this illustrated in daily life. Faithfulness in the smaller sphere ever leads to a larger sphere, to new activities, to grander opportunities, to more splendid achievements. Thus, and thus only, can one become ruler over many things. More of the forces of nature are obedient to him, more of the influences over men are subject to his control. Even those which to the unfaithful bring ruin will be made to aid him in his work of good.

This may be seen in the increased powers over nature given to Christian nations. One man can do the work of thousands in the savage state. Authority is given over land and sea, over winds and lightnings, over the hidden forces of nature, over fruits and flowers and trees; all minister to usefulness, character, and happiness. This reward will have its greatest realization in the future life.

Fourth Reward. **Enter thou into the joy of thy lord**, participate in his joy and share with him in his pleasure, the same kind of joy which our Lord himself feels.[1] Leighton's words on this entering into the joy of the Lord are beautiful: "It is but little we can receive here, some drops of joy that enter into *us*, but there *we* shall enter into joy, as vessels put into a sea of happiness." The joy of the Lord Jesus Christ, of which the faithful, like him, shall partake in some measure here, and in its fulness hereafter, is (1) the joy of a free activity in doing right, like the joy of motion in health, like the song of a bird in the morning. (2) The joy of entire consecration and submission to God. (3) The joy of doing good, of self-denial for others. (4) The joy of perfect faith in a wise and loving God, committing everything to his care. (5) Joy in the conscious love of God to us, communion and friendship with him. (6) The joy of loving others. (7) The joy of seeing others saved. (8) The joy of victory. (9) In the end, outward delights and pleasures to correspond with the inward joy.

Fifth Reward. We learn from ver. 28 that the faithful one has still another source of reward, from the very failures of the unfaithful. By them he learns what to avoid; he finds the shoals and hidden rocks, and escapes from danger of shipwreck; he has the opportunities others refuse to accept; he does the work they leave undone; he makes use of their works and the methods which they fail to use.

The Man with Two Talents. 22. **He also that had received two talents . . . gained two other talents.** He was as faithful and as successful as the one who had received five talents. He would soon be equal to any one who had received five talents, but had not made so good a use of them. All depends on the *ratio of faithfulness*. The progress is by geometrical progression. Even he who had received but one talent could have surpassed in a short time one who used five with less faithfulness. What an inspiration to use to the best of our ability all that God has entrusted to us!

23. **Well done, good and faithful servant.** He had the same rewards as the man with five talents, for he was equally faithful. The rewards were according to his ability. He had all he could use or enjoy. His cup, small or large, was full and running over.

Practical Applications. (1) Religion does not make all Christians alike, nor give them the same work to do. There is an infinite variety of endowments, and great differences of capacity both in kind and degree, and a great diversity in the matter of opportunity for service.

(2) Each has precisely what is fitted to his ability and circumstances, — no more, no less. "Every man has just as many opportunities of service as he can use with advantage."[2]

(3) He that has the least has a great deal. A single talent was a large amount of money. What God has entrusted to the poorest and weakest of us is infinite in value and power.

(4) "It seems very certain that the world is to grow better and richer in the future, not by the magnificent achievements of the highly gifted

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[1] Trench's *Poems*, "The Monk and the Bird," gives a beautiful and impressive idea of the joys of heaven.

[2] Wm. M. Taylor, D. D.

24 Then he which had received the one talent came and said, Lord, I knew thee that thou art an hard man, reaping where thou hast not sown, and gathering where thou hast not strawed:

25 And I was afraid, and went away and hid thy talent in the earth: lo, there thou hast that is thine.

26 His lord answered and said unto him, Thou wicked and slothful servant, thou knewest that I reap where I sowed not, and gather where I have not strawed:

27 Thou oughtest therefore to have put my money to the exchangers, and then at my coming I should have received back mine own with usury.

b 1 Sam. 25. 3. *c* Cp. 2 Cor. 8. 12. *d* ch. 20. 14. *e* ch. 18. 32. Prov. 20. 4. Rom. 12. 11.

few, but by the patient faithfulness of the one-talented many." [1]

(5) Phillips Brooks, in his sermon on the *Man with Two Talents*, suggests (1) that most of us count ourselves persons of two talents, average people. The two-talented people have not the inspiration of the five-talented from conscious power and incentive to great results, "high enough to hear the calling of the stars," nor the spur that comes to the one-talented man from desperation, "low enough to feel the tumult of the earthquake," and difficulties "which are a bugle call to many men." (2) The two-talented man has a great chance in the world. Being an average man he can sympathize with average men, and his success and usefulness show themselves as possible to the majority. Small talents with will and purpose can accomplish great things. There is no limit to their final achievement.[2]

(6) "A little man with a great gospel is mightier than a great man with a little gospel." The Gospel is the same mighty wisdom and power of God, no matter who uses its power. See 1 Cor. 1: 18–29.

THE MAN WITH ONE TALENT. 24. **Lord, I knew thee that thou art an hard man.** That is, hard-hearted; insensible to the feelings of others in all matters relating to money, and hence close-fisted as regarded his own, and grasping as regarded what might by hook or crook be got from others. **Reaping where thou hast not sown.** Unjustly gathering for himself the fruits of other men's labors. **Gathering where thou hast not strawed**, or "scattered." "The reference of the expression is, apparently, to the husbandman's work on the threshing-floor. He first scattered over the area of the floor the loosened sheaves of grain. Then he threshed them and gathered the pure grain. *The grain was gathered where the grain-bearing stalks were scattered.*" [3] "The radical want of nobility in his character is shown perhaps most of all in this, that not content with being listless, idle, cowardly, he begins to shelter himself beneath a caricature of the master." "He shows himself a paltry-minded, poor-spirited, bad-hearted man." [4]

25. **And I was afraid.** To risk the money, lest he should lose it, and incur his master's displeasure.

26. **Thou wicked and slothful servant.** Whatever his excuses, his real reasons are found in this sentence. His excuses were vain because they were excuses and not reasons. **Thou knewest**, *i. e.*, accepting your statement. I will judge you by your own words (Luke 19: 22). What you plead as an excuse is the very reason why you should have acted differently.

27. **Thou oughtest therefore**, if you believed I am such a man as you say, **to have put my money**, which was mine, not yours, **to the exchangers.** The great variety of coins and systems of money which found their way into Judea through the return of Jews from all nations at the time of the feasts, and the three kinds of money, Jewish, Greek, and Roman, in common use, required a considerable number of men to be employed as money-changers. "The wealthier members of this class received money on deposit, for the purpose of investment on which interest at fixed rates was paid." [5] That is, they were something like modern bankers. **Received mine own with usury**, interest, pay for the use of the money. It should be "interest," as in R. V., not *usury*. Originally the words meant the same, but now *usury* means exorbitant or illegal interest. In the original the word for *usury* (τόκῳ) means *offspring*. It is the product or offspring of capital. This may mean

[1] Bp. Phillips Brooks, *Sermons*, "The Man with Two Talents."

[2] Fiske's *Critical Period of American History*, pp. 224–228, furnishes an excellent example.

[3] Morison.

[4] Bp. W. Boyd Carpenter.

[5] Hastings' *Dictionary of the Bible*.

28 Take ye away therefore the talent from him, and give *it* unto him which hath the ten talents.

29 *f* For unto every one that hath shall be given, and he shall have abundance: but from him that hath not, even that which he hath shall be taken away.

30 And *g* cast ye out the *h* unprofitable servant into the outer darkness: *g* there shall be the weeping and gnashing of teeth.

f Cp. Luke 12. 48. See ch. 13. 12. *g* See ch. 8. 12. *h* Cp. Luke 17. 10.

that he should entrust money to those who cared for the poor, and for missions, while he did nothing himself. It may mean that he was at least to take care of his talents in a small way, so that they be not lessened.

His excuses were vain, because there were many examples of one-talented men showing great increase. "We may be sure that if his heroism was not equal to the effort to do something with his one talent, he would have readily found plausible excuses for not trading vigorously with five talents or ten. The truth is that the great successes which startle the world come more frequently from the men who start with the one talent than from those who start with the five or the ten. The millionaires of to-day were not all men born in purple and fine linen, and given bank notes to play with in their cradles." [1]

His First Punishment. This was the displeasure of his master, and the revelation to himself and to others of his real character. He saw his own ugliness as in a mirror of the soul.

His Second Punishment. 28. **Take therefore the talent from him.** The punishment for refusing to use the talent is the loss of the talent itself. (1) The *opportunities* will be taken away from him who neglects them; he will not see them, nor be able to use them. (2) The *ability* to use them is taken away. The unused limb grows weak; the still water dries up or becomes foul; the inactive mind loses its power. This loss of the talent begins in this life; is gradual, that men may take warning and have opportunity to repent; but finally, at the judgment day, the talent will be wholly and irrevocably taken away. The man failed for lack of sturdiness and manhood. **And give it unto him which hath ten talents,** because he is fitted to use it well. The talent must not lie idle. The faithful servant has not only those rewards which grow out of his faithfulness, but other and greater things are committed to his care, new capital to produce new results. The talent cannot remain unused, the opportunities cannot remain neglected, because some are slothful. Those who are fitted to use them must have them.

29. **For unto every one that hath,** in the sense that the men of two and five talents *had* or possessed, by the hold which faithful use gives. The man with the one talent buried it; he did not have it. **Shall be given, and he shall have abundance.** This is illustrated in worldly and intellectual affairs every day. **From him that hath not,** has not made true use of, and therefore does not really possess. **Shall be taken away even that which he hath,** which was entrusted to him. The opportunities pass away, the abilities diminish, the powers wane. So it will be in the spiritual world.

Sins of Omission. This man reminds us of those who were condemned in the parable of the judgment (Matt. 25: 41–46), not for positive crimes, but for refusing to do the good they might have done. We are responsible not only for our sins, but for all the good that might have flowed from our lives, had we been faithful. Nothing is so improvable as the human soul. It is well to note also that the punishment for sins of omission is like the sin. It omits the best things from this life and the next.[2]

His Third Punishment. 30. **Cast . . . into outer darkness.** There was no other place for him. His nature was contrary to the light. He had no part in the household of the saints, for he was not a saint. His punishment is the natural result of his crime. **Weeping and gnashing of teeth,** expressing the terrible pain and loss, which was all the greater because he brought it on himself. His lord had given him every opportunity, and done all things that were possible, but he had

[1] Prof. Carpenter in *Sunday-School Times.*

[2] A capital illustration can be drawn from Dickens' ingenious story in his *Household Words* of the Skitzlanders, who were born with every limb perfect, but at a certain age all unused portions of the body fell away, so that some persons were only "a head without a heart;" others, "a pair of eyes and a bundle of nerves;" or the bump of acquisitiveness was all that remained. Very few persons were perfect in body in Skitzland.

The fish in Mammoth Cave, Ky., are entirely blind, from their long existence as a race in perfect darkness, although the fish of the same species in the streams outside in the light have good eyes.

31 *i* [When / But when] the Son of man shall come in his glory, and all the [holy] angels with him, *j* then shall he sit [upon / on] the throne of his glory:

32 And before him *k* shall be gathered *l* all [the] nations: and *m* he shall separate them one from another, as [a / the] shepherd [divideth his / separateth the] *n* sheep from the goats:

i See ch. 16. 27, 28. *j* ch. 19. 28. *k* Cp. ch. 24. 31. *l* Joel 3. 12. Cp. ch. 24. 14 & 28. 19. *m* ch. 13. 49. *n* Ezek. 34. 17.

refused them. This will apply to the Jews at the time of Christ and the years following. But still more to those who neglect the Gospel, and refuse to use the great privileges and opportunities God has given them.

III. THE JUDGMENT: A VISION, vers. 31–46.

The description here given is not a parable, but A PICTURE, A VISION OF THE FUTURE. It does not liken the kingdom of God to anything, but describes "the literal Son of man, in his literal person, at his literal coming to a literal judgment," in that language and picture form which can most vividly and truly express to us the great reality. None of the books on the parables in my possession include this picture among their parables, except Professor Richey, who calls it "the sheep and the goats," but he regards it as "a prophecy more than a parable." While its principles apply to earlier times, we are carried far beyond them to the final scenes of the Gospel dispensation, to the end of the world, the final judgment of men.

THE JUDGE. 31. **When the Son of man**, Jesus himself, **shall come**, referring to his great final coming, **in his glory**. Not in a state of humiliation, as a man, poor, unknown, despised and rejected of men, crucified; but in his own true nature, divine, honored, and worshipped, the glorious King of kings and Lord of lords. **And all the holy angels with him.** Instead of a few humble followers, he will have a glorious retinue of the most noble and powerful and radiant beings in the universe, to be his attendants, to execute his will, to be his messengers with the speed of light. "The Son of man coming in the clouds of heaven with power and great glory" (Matt. 24: 30). **Then shall he sit.** An expression of finished victory. **Upon the throne.** A king and judge, in contrast with his position as a prisoner before Pilate. The throne is the seat and source of sovereign power. "This throne is great and white (Rev. 20: 11), that is, immaculately pure in its government and decisions. **Throne of his glory.** More than 'glorious throne;' the throne peculiar to, manifesting, his glory. What and where it will be, we do not know."[1] So terrible will that day be, that from the Judge's face the earth and the heaven will flee away (Rev. 20: 11). And great and small will say to the mountains and rocks, Fall on us, and hide us from the face of him that sitteth on the throne, and from the wrath of the Lamb (Rev. 6: 16).

32. **And before him shall be gathered all nations.** "All the nations." "The phrase is equivalent to *the whole human race.* Not only those who shall be alive at his coming, but *all who have ever lived are embraced within the scope of the Saviour's conception.*"[2] "And I saw the dead, small and great, stand before God; and the books were opened: and another book was opened, which is *the book* of life: and the dead were judged out of those things which were written in the books, according to their works. And the sea gave up the dead which were in it; and death and hell delivered up the dead which were in them: and they were judged every man according to their works" (Rev. 20: 12, 13). **Shall separate them one from another.** Into two, and only two well-defined classes. From the nature of things there can be only two classes. All men either love God supremely, or they do not. They have begun the heavenly life, or they have not. There are grades and degrees in each class, but there is a real and wide distinction between the classes. **As a shepherd divideth his sheep from the goats.** Literally, from the kids, the young goats, which have not yet reached their maturity. No sinner in this world has reached his maturity in sin.

"The morning after reaching Palestine, when setting out from Ramleh, across the plain of Sharon, we saw a shepherd leading forth a flock of white sheep and black goats, all mingled as they followed him. Presently he turned aside into a little green valley, and stood facing the flock. When a sheep came up he tapped it with his long staff on the right side of the head, and it quickly moved off to his right; a goat he tapped on the other side, and it went to his left. Thus the Saviour's image presented itself exactly before our eyes."[3]

"The flocks of sheep and goats fed together in the same field. The goats were of a finer breed than I had before seen, and the sheep had long, coarse, hairy wool; so that, in casting your eye

[1] Prof. Schaff. [2] Morison. [3] Prof. J. A. Broadus.

33 Aud and he shall set the sheep on his right hand, but the goats on the left.
34 Then shall [o] the King say unto [p] them on his right hand, Come, ye [q] blessed of my Father, [r] inherit [s] the kingdom [t] prepared for you [u] from the foundation of the world:

o ver. 40. Luke 19. 38. Rev. 17. 14 & 19. 16. Cp. Isai. 6. 5. *p* 1 Kin. 2. 19. Ps. 45. 9 & 110. 1. *q* Cp. Ps. 37. 22 & Isai. 65. 23 & Eph. 1. 3. *r* ch. 19. 29. 1 Pet. 3. 9. Rev. 21. 7. Cp. Rom. 8. 17 & Tit. 3. 7 & Heb. 1. 14 & James 2. 5, *al.* *s* Luke 12. 32 & 22. 29. *t* ch. 20. 23. Cp. 1 Cor. 2. 9 & Heb. 11. 16. *u* See ch. 13. 35.

over the field, you could hardly say at the first glance which were goats, and which were sheep. The shepherd at evening brought the flock home, and separated them into two parts, putting the sheep by themselves, and the goats by themselves."[1]

"Though the two kinds of animals are often mixed together when out in the fields grazing, yet to the shepherd's eye they are never confounded; and when, for any purpose whatsoever, they require to be separated, the separation is effected unerringly. The two species of animals, though in some respects somewhat alike, are yet very different. When travelling between Joppa and Jerusalem, I saw, at a certain spot, a great intermingled flock of sheep and goats. The goats were all perfectly black, the sheep were all beautifully white; and thus, even to my eye, and while I was looking from a distance, the distinction between the two kinds was strikingly obvious. If a separation of the two had been required, there would not have been the least danger of a mistake."[2]

The Sheep. 33. **And he shall set the sheep.** Who represent the righteous, because they are gentle, obedient, peaceful, ready to follow their guide, affectionate, — qualities which, when shown by men toward Christ, will lead to righteousness. **On his right hand**, the place of honor and favor. Some think there is a reference here to a custom in the Sanhedrim of putting the acquitted prisoners on the right of the president, and those who were convicted on his left.[3] The expression "on his right hand" is literally "*from* his right hand," beginning there and extending to the right, in a row, or expanding into a company.

The Goats. **But the goats on the left.** The *goat* is especially a repulsive animal, and so a fit image for wicked men; and in Hebrew there is a single word which seems to designate the *goat* and a *demon*.[4] The wicked are termed goats from their stubbornness (*Lange*); from their wantonness and stench (*Grotius*); because they are wild and intractable (*Schaff*); because they are comparatively worthless (*Meyer*), who thinks that the word for goats is in the original put in the diminutive, ἐρίφια, "little goats," "kids," for the purpose of expressing contempt. But we are to remember that Christ was himself the shepherd also of the goats, the shepherd of all mankind. He did all that was possible to change them into sheep.

The Reward of the Righteous. 34. **Then shall the King say unto them on his right hand.** The sheep, the righteous. **Come.** Draw near to your Elder Brother, to your Father, to your home, for here is the place for you. **Ye blessed of my Father** means exactly "my Father's blessed ones," denoting not simply that they have been blessed by him, but that they are his. Blessings innumerable had come to them through their being willing to become his children and accept the kind of blessings he had to bestow, such as his loving care, the bestowal of the Holy Spirit, the experiences of the Gospel, the renewal of the heart, sanctification by the Spirit, the power to become children and heirs of God, the gifts and fruits of the Spirit, eternal life, the favor of God, the rest in the everlasting arms, the pavilion under the shadow of his wings. **Inherit.** Receive not by purchase, or by labors, but by becoming children of God, like God, and therefore heirs, — heirs of God, and joint heirs with Jesus Christ. Every one must be the heir of him whose child he is. He that is a child of sin is an heir of sin; a child of the devil inherits from the devil; a child of goodness and of God inherits from God. **The kingdom.** The kingdom of heaven, the kingdom which consists in righteousness, peace, joy in the Holy Ghost (Rom. 14: 17), in which saints reign over infinite forces and powers to make them minister to happiness and good: "All things are yours," because "ye are Christ's." (See on 19: 28.)

> "Thy feet, at last, shall stand on jasper floors;
> Thy heart, at last, shall seem a thousand hearts —
> Each single heart with myriad raptures filled —
> While thou shalt sit with princes and with kings,
> Rich in the jewel of a ransomed soul."

Prepared for you from the foundation of the world. There is wonderful comfort and inspiration in the assurance that God regards us as worthy of his thought and planning from the very beginning; that it was not demons, nor chance, but the wise and loving God, who planned our

[1] Clarke's *Glimpses of the Old World.*
[2] Morison.
[3] Freeman, *Manners and Customs.*
[4] Whedon.

35 For [v] I was an hungred, and ye gave me meat: I was thirsty, and ye [w] gave me drink: [x] I was a stranger, and ye took me in:

36 Naked, [y] and ye clothed me: [z] I was sick, and ye visited me: [a] I was in prison, and ye came unto me.

37 Then shall the righteous answer him, saying, Lord, when saw we thee an hungred, and fed thee? or thirsty, and gave thee drink?

38 When saw we thee a stranger, and took thee in? or naked, and clothed thee?

39 Or when saw we thee sick, or in prison, and came unto thee?

40 And [b] the King shall answer and say unto them, [c] Verily I say unto you, Inasmuch as ye have done it unto one of the least of these [d] my brethren, *even* these least, ye have done it unto me.

v Isai. 58. 7. Ezek. 18. 7, 16. Cp. James 2. 15, 16. *w* ch. 10. 42. *x* Job 31. 32. Rom. 12. 13. Heb. 13. 1, 2. 3 John 5. *y* Cp. Ecclus. 7. 35 & Luke 10. 33, 34. *z* James 1. 27. *a* 2 Tim. 1. 16. Cp. Heb. 10. 34 & 13. 3.
b ver. 34. *c* See ch. 10. 40, 42. *d* ch. 28. 10. John 20. 17. Rom. 8. 29. Heb. 2. 11. Cp. ch. 12. 50.

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lives, and prepared a place for us in his work, in his kingdom, and in his home.

35, 36. **I was an hungred.** In the persons of his younger brethren, his earthly friends, who were his representatives. **Meat. Food. Took me in.** To your hearts and homes. **Came unto me,** to comfort and aid.

Professor Carr suggests that there is a climax in this enumeration.

1. Food.
2. Drink. } These are recognized duties.
3. Shelter.
4. Clothing the naked.
5. Visiting the sick. } These are voluntary acts of self-forgetting love.
6. Comforting the prisoner.

NOTE (1) that a good character, a heavenly nature, is absolutely essential to being the children of God, and receiving his reward.

(2) The acts of kindness here mentioned are but specimens and illustrations of the good deeds of God's children. The good deeds are not substitutes for faith, and prayer, and love, and honesty, but they are the proofs of a right heart, from which all virtues grow. The fruits of the Spirit are the proofs of the Spirit. Flowers and fruits are not substitutes for seeds and culture, and the life of the tree. All these are the means by which flowers and fruits may be gained. The Church is not afraid of good works. They are what a church is for. But it is opposed to imitations which are substitutes for love of God and man.

(3) These acts are such as are possible to all Christians. They are not such as require merely an outlay of money, but such as involve also the sacrifice of time, strength, rest, comfort.

We never know how small a thing may become a benediction to a human life.

"Only a thought, but the work it wrought
Could never by pen or tongue be taught;
For it ran through a life like a thread of gold,
And the life bore fruit a hundredfold."

(4) If ministering to the bodies of men is a Christian duty and privilege, still more is the ministering to their spiritual needs like the apostles' carrying the bread of heaven to the heathen, helping men to the water of life, bringing liberty to those bound in the prison-house of sin, and who are sick in spirit and lonely, "without hope and without God in the world." Christ himself has done all these things for us. "Freely ye have received, freely give."

UNCONSCIOUS GOODNESS. 37–39. **Lord, when saw we thee an hungred,** etc. "The righteous stand amazed that the Son of man should so overwhelm their trifling services with a glorious reward. Nay, they can hardly recollect any service at all. (1) The ministries were so trifling, and were bestowed on objects so inconsiderable, often with such mixture of bad motives and such deficiency of good, that it amazes them to find every transient item legible in the book of the Judge, now seated upon the throne of his glory. Mark how he receives them, how he gathers up the bruised, withered, scattered flowers which seemed dying in our hands, and makes of them a garland, binds them on his brow as a diadem; points to them before his angels as an honor."[1] (2) While they had done these things from a spirit of love to Christ, they had not thought of doing them to a great king, who could reward them, but only to those who needed their care and love.

40. **Inasmuch as ye have done it unto one of the least of these my brethren,** etc. The obscurest, the poorest, the most despised of his disciples, and those with the least of his spirit and

[1] Prof. J. W. Alexander.

41 Then shall he say also unto them on the left hand, [e] Depart from me, ye [f] cursed, into [g] everlasting (the eternal) fire, which is prepared for [h] the devil and his angels:

42 For [i] I was an hungred, and ye gave me no meat: I was thirsty, and ye gave me no drink:

43 I was a stranger, and ye took me not in; naked, and ye clothed me not; sick, and in prison, and ye visited me not.

e ch. 7. 23. *f* Cp. Heb. 6. 8. *g* ch. 13. 40, 42 & 18. 8. Mark 9. 43, 48. Jude 7. Cp. Luke 16. 24. See 2 Thess. 1. 8. *h* 2 Pet. 2. 4. Jude 6. Rev. 12. 7. *i* Job 22. 7.

character. Moreover, "the least of these my brethren" is not limited to Christians, but includes all whom we may help for his sake, as he has taught us in the parable of the Good Samaritan.[1]

"The Holy Supper is kept, indeed,
In whatso we share with another's need, —
Not what we give, but what we share, —
For the gift without the giver is bare.
Who gives himself with his alms feeds three —
Himself, his hungering neighbor, and me." [2]

NOTE (1) the unconsciousness of the righteous shows that their virtues were sincere and true. Whosoever does good deeds *for the sake of* the reward *deserves* no reward, and will obtain none, for the soul of goodness is left out of such deeds.

(2) Unconscious goodness is the highest form of goodness. The beginner in music counts his measures, and studies on what note he shall place each finger; but the perfect musician strikes the right notes and expresses the right emotions almost as naturally as he breathes, or as the birds warble their morning songs.

"We are apt to estimate the merit of our good deeds according to the struggle we make in doing them; whereas, the greater our virtue, the less we shall have to struggle in order to do them, and it is purely the weakness and imperfection of our virtue that make it so hard to do well. Accordingly, we find that he who does no duty without being goaded up to it is conscious of much more virtue than he has; while he who does every duty as a thing of course and a matter of delight is *unconscious of his virtue, simply because he has so much of it.*" [3]

(3) What a splendid opportunity opens here for us to do that to which our hearts often prompt us, some act of personal devotion and love to Jesus. We would express our gratitude to him personally.

(4) This direct and personal service of Jesus tends to transfigure all our daily lives with the radiance of heaven.

"So shall I join the choir invisible,
Whose music is the gladness of the world." [4]

THE DOOM OF THE WICKED. 41. **Unto them on the left hand, Depart from me, ye cursed.** Those who are far from God in character are punished by being made to live far from his home, his heaven, his joy, his intimate friendship. Nor is this a mere arbitrary punishment; for there is a natural repulsion and antagonism between the good and the evil. The wicked not only *shall not* but *cannot* see God. **Ye cursed.** Abiding under the curse of sin. The righteous were "the blessed ones of the Father." But it is not said that the wicked are cursed of the Father; for they are cursed by themselves, in spite of the love and goodness of the Father. **Into everlasting fire.** Fire that cannot be quenched or escaped. Not literal fire, for we cannot conceive of literal fire consuming a spirit, or a spiritual body, even; but the words mean some punishment as terrible to the soul as literal fire is to the body. **Prepared for the devil and his angels.** Who were the first beings to sin, and therefore the ones for whom a place of punishment was prepared. The kingdom was prepared *for you*, but the fire has been prepared for *the devil and his angels, not for you;* because there is election to life, but there is no reprobation to death; a book of life, but no book of death; but they who will serve the devil must share with him in the end.[5]

42, 43. **For I was an hungred, and ye gave me no meat,** etc. Only sins of *omission* are mentioned here; showing that the absence of good works, the destitution of love, or the domin-

[1] Leigh Hunt's poem, *Abou ben Adhem*, who, when the angel appeared to him with his book, in which were written "the names of those who love the Lord," asked that his own name might be written as "one who loves his fellow men." The angel appeared again, —

"And showed the names whom love of God had blessed,
And lo! Ben Adhem's name led all the rest."

See the story of the Apostle Thomas and the palace he built for King Gondoforus; Mrs. Jameson's *Sacred and Legendary Art;* "Legend of Strasburg Cathedral" in *The Uplands of God;* the poem, "Wrought into Gold," in *Suggestive Illustrations on Matthew*, p. 211.

[2] J. Russell Lowell, *Poems*, "Vision of Sir Launfal."

[3] H. N. Hudson, *Lectures on Shakespeare*, vol. ii. p. 103.

[4] George Eliot.

[5] Dean Alford.

44 Then shall they also answer, [him,] saying, Lord, when saw we thee an hungred, or athirst, or a stranger, or naked, or sick, or in prison, and did not minister unto thee?

45 Then shall he answer them, saying, Verily I say unto you, Inasmuch as ye did [it] not [to] unto one of [the] these least, [of these,] *j* ye did [it] not [to] unto me.

46 And these shall go away *k* into [everlasting] eternal punishment: but the righteous *k* into *l* [life eternal.] eternal life.

j Cp. Luke 10. 16 & Acts 9. 5 & 1 Cor. 8. 12. *k* Dan. 12. 2. John 5. 29. Cp. Acts 24. 15. *l* Rom. 2. 7 & 5. 21 & 6. 23. Cp. John 10. 28 & 1 John 2. 25, *al.*

ion of selfishness disqualifies man for blessedness, and is sufficient, even without positive crimes, to exclude him from heaven.

Sins of Omission. (1) There are two ways of measuring sin, *down* and *up; down*, by counting all the actual sins we have done, — all covetings, anger, evil thoughts, selfishness, falsehoods, dishonesties; *up*, by seeing what we might have been, all the good deeds we might have done, the character we might have formed, the blessed, useful life we might have lived, and God intended us to live, and then placing beside this picture the life we have actually lived: this will show the number of our sins of omission. But probably we have omitted more of *quality* from our life than mere *quantity*. It is not more the definite acts that we have left out, than the perfectness, the beauty, the spirituality, from the deeds we have done.

(2) The sins of omission prove that we have not true faith and love toward Jesus. Good beings could not omit the things mentioned here from their lives.

(3) From sins of omission complete recovery seems impossible. No future good works will do the deeds left undone. The greatest losses are sustained by neglect, as a disease neglected, lifeboat neglected, care neglected. One neglects to learn to sing, and then it is not the chorister's fault if he fails to have part in the anthem.[1]

(4) The poorest hope of heaven is that which is based on the words "I have done no harm." The very stones, insects, reptiles, may say as much as that.

(5) The punishment is like the sin: it omits heaven and joy and God and the companionship of the good from our lives, and adds the everlasting fire.

44, 45. **When saw we thee an hungred**, etc. Like the righteous, they were unconscious of the extent of what they had done. (1) They looked at the outward good they had done, and not at its motives. (2) The sorrows of others did not make much impression upon them. (3) The selfishness and neglect did not seem so very evil to them, for it was like a small stream in the mountains, and they did not see the river it would become. Their sin was as an egg, or as a seed, and it did not seem so hideous or so poisonous as the dragon, or the upas tree, that grew from it. (4) This unconsciousness of their guilt shows its greatness. They were so bad that they did not even see the true standard of living.

46. **These . . . into everlasting** (eternal, the same original word as eternal in the following phrase) **punishment: but the righteous into life eternal.**[2] For the same word is used for

[1] See Hood's *Poems*, "The Lady's Dream," where she saw the funeral procession of one who had died through her neglect; and the sick, the starving, whom she might have helped; — their sad eyes burned her very soul.

> "And yet it was never in my soul
> To play so ill a part;
> But evil is wrought by want of thought,
> As well as by want of heart."

[2] A German writer represents a good man as coming, after his death, to the gates of heaven, and welcomed to its glories. An angel was commissioned to be his conductor and teacher. First he took him to a point where he could see the most fearful representation of sin when it had brought forth death. It was a fearful place peopled with everything hateful, loathsome, and wretched. His guide bade him look still farther down the dismal vault, and farther still, where were objects more anguished, and loathsome, and haggard with wasting woe. He bade him concentrate his vision on an object more hideous and disgusting than he ever could have imagined. "That," said his conductor, "in the ages of eternity would have been you, had you not repented and believed. Behold the woe and degradation from which you have been saved by the compassion of your Saviour!" His guide then took him to a point from which could be seen the glories of the redeemed. He saw the highest ranks of angels, he heard their songs and hallelujahs, and was ravished. He was directed to look far beyond all these, and there beheld an object more beautiful than the highest saint who had been longest in heaven, more blissful than seraph or archangel. He heard music ineffably more sweet than any which flowed from the harps of the angels nearest the throne. The excess of glory overpowered him. Then said his conductor, "That beautiful and enraptured being is YOURSELF many ages hence. Behold the glory and the bliss to which you are exalted through the salvation of the Redeemer!"

both in the original. The punishment is without end and without remedy. Some have taught that "eternal," in both cases, refers to the *quality* of the existence, not to its duration; but it is the duration which shows the quality, and distinguishes this punishment from those temporary ones through which there is hope of reform. "Under irreversible natural law character tends to a final permanence, good or bad." [1] It is this tendency which confirms and explains the awful warning in this verse. It seems strange that such words as these should come from the most loving Being in the universe, and just as he was to show the infinitude of his love upon Calvary. But it is from the heights of love that the greatest depth of the guilt and the danger of sin can be seen, and whence should come the most earnest warnings against sin. They were a warning bell, that does not kindle the fire, but seeks to save men from its flames.

"We shape ourselves the joy or fear
Of which the coming life is made,
And fill our future atmosphere
With sunshine or with shade.

"The tissue of the life to be
We weave in colors all our own,
And in the field of destiny
We reap what we have sown."

There is no revenge or desire to injure in the divine punishment. All is done that can be done to reform the sinner; and when there is no hope of his becoming righteous, there is nothing left but punishment and exclusion from heaven. This is the best that can be done for him; it is the necessary result of his character; it is necessary for the protection of righteousness; it is necessary as a warning, and means of persuading others to become righteous.

[1] Joseph Cook's *Monday Lectures, Transcendentalism*, "The Final Permanence of Moral Character." Plutarch's *Delay of Divine Justice*, Dr. Peabody's edition. The poem *The Doomed Man*. Lowell's *Poems*, "The Weigher." Pres. G. Stanley Hall, *A Study of Fears*. Whately's *Annotations*, p. 17, the illustration of the Butterfly and Caterpillar; and p. 383, on the prevention of crime.

CHAPTER 26.

SECTION XXII. — LAST TWO DAYS OF JESUS WITH HIS DISCIPLES.

1. CONSPIRACY OF THE RULERS, vers. 1–5. Tuesday evening and Wednesday, April 4 and 5.
2. SUPPER AT BETHANY, vers. 6–13. Saturday evening, April 1.
3. CONSPIRACY OF JUDAS WITH THE RULERS, vers. 14–16. Wednesday, April 5.
4. THE LAST SUPPER, vers. 17–30. Thursday night, April 6.
5. FAREWELL DISCOURSES, vers. 31–35, and John, chs. 14–17. Thursday night, April 6.
6. IN THE GARDEN OF GETHSEMANE, vers. 36–46. Thursday night, April 6.

SECTION XXIII. — THE TRIAL OF JESUS, 26 : 47 — 27 : 26.

1. THE BETRAYAL AND ARREST, vers. 47–56. Early Friday morning, April 7.
2. THE TRIAL BEFORE THE JEWISH AUTHORITIES, vers. 57–75. Early Friday morning, April 7.
   - Before Annas.
   - Before Caiaphas and the Sanhedrim.
   - The Charge.
   - The Sentence.
   - Mockeries.
   - The Denials of Peter.
   - The Repentance of Peter.

1 AND it came to pass, when Jē'sus had finished all these sayings, words, he said unto his disciples,

2 [m] Ye know that after two days [n] is the feast of the passover, the passover cometh, and [o] the Son of man is [p] betrayed, delivered up to be crucified.

m For vers. 2–5, see Mark 14. 1, 2 & Luke 22. 1, 2. *n* See John 6. 4. *o* ver. 24. *p* See ch. 20. 18, 19.

Tuesday Evening, April 4.

1. THE CONSPIRACY OF THE RULERS, vers. 1–5.

PARALLELS. Mark 14 : 1, 2; Luke 22 : 1, 2.

1. **When Jesus had finished all these sayings**, reported in chapters 24, 25, and spoken toward evening on Mount Olivet overlooking Jerusalem.

2. **After two days**, Wednesday and Thursday intervening, **is the feast of the passover**. This was the chief of the Jewish festivals, beginning

3 [q] Then assembled were gathered together the chief priests, and the scribes, and the elders of the people, unto the [r] palace court of the high priest, who was called Cā'ia-phās;
4 [t] and they took counsel together And consulted that they might take Jē'sus by subtilty, and kill him. him.
5 But they said, Not on during the feast, day, [u] lest there be an uproar a tumult arise among the people.

q Cp. Ps. 2. 2 & John 11. 47 & Acts 4. 27. Luke 3. 2. John 11. 49 & 18. 13. Acts 4. 6.
r ver. 58, 69. Luke 11. 21. John 18. 15. Cp. Rev. 11. 2.
s ver. 57.
t John 11. 53. See ch. 21. 46.
u ch. 27. 24. Cp. Luke 22. 6 (mg.).

in the middle, *i. e.*, at the full moon, of the month Nisan (March — April), the first month of the Jewish religious year. The Jewish months were lunar, and the time of the solar year varied just as

Court of an Oriental House.

our Easter varies from the 25th of March to the 27th of April. (See on ver. 17.) **And the Son of man is betrayed to be crucified.** The betrayal and Crucifixion took place on Friday, April 7, as Jesus foretold, although the rulers decided (ver. 5) not to carry out their plans during the feast.

3. **Then**, in view of what Jesus had said to them in the Temple, ch. 21: 23—23: 39, and soon after he left them. It was Tuesday evening. **Assembled together the chief priests**, the heads of the twenty-four courses of priests who served in the Temple by turns, but who would be likely all to be present at the great Passover festival. **And the scribes**, Jews learned in the law, and recognized as religious leaders. These were members of the Sanhedrim together with **the elders**, the lay members, representatives or heads of the principal families. **Unto the palace**, αὐλήν, the open court or hall, which constituted the centre of a large Oriental house. Sometimes an inner court was covered, and seats or divans placed around three sides, while the fourth side could be separated from the first court by portières. This was used as a festal hall, or reception-room, where these members of the Sanhedrim met, not in official session of the Council, but "as a private conference of its members." The official sessions were probably held in the hall Gazith.[1] **Who was called Caiaphas.** His name was Joseph [2] and he was surnamed Caiaphas, which "became his ordinary and official designation. He was son-in-law of Annas, who had formerly been high priest, and who still continued, in virtue of his family, social position, age, and character, to be a kind of chieftain in the sacerdotal circle. Caiaphas was elevated to the high priesthood, over the head of Simon, by the Roman procurator, Valerius Gratus, Pilate's predecessor; and continued in the office during the whole procuratorship of Pilate." [3]

4. **And consulted that they might take Jesus by subtilty**, δόλῳ, by stratagem, by guile, by some snare, accomplishing their end secretly, without any public arrest of this prophet. **And kill him.** This they had already determined to do. They consulted to decide how it could most safely and surely be done.

5. **But they said, Not on the feast.** Omit "day," which the italics show not to be found in the original Greek. The feast lasted seven days, and they proposed to keep him out of the way, entirely quiet, so long as the feast lasted, and after that to kill him, when the great number of his Galilean friends and sympathizers had returned to their homes. **Lest there be an uproar**, θόρυβος, "the noise of a clamorous and excited multitude, of riotous persons; a tumult, as a breach of public order." [4] Great numbers from Galilee had come to attend the Passover, many of whom had heard Jesus speak, or had themselves or their friends been cured by him. Moreover the Galileans as a whole were not so prejudiced, or so bitterly opposed to Jesus and his teachings, as were the Jews of Jerusalem. They could easily be aroused to defend Jesus, as only two days before they had joined in welcoming him with palm branches and hallelujahs.

II. THE SUPPER AT BETHANY, vers. 6–13.

TIME. Saturday evening, April 1.

PARALLELS, Mark 14: 3–9; John 12: 1–11.

PLACE IN THE HISTORY. This event belongs between chapters 20 and 21, as we learn from

[1] See Lightfoot and Schürer, 2: 1, 190.
[2] Josephus, *Antiquities*, xviii. 2: 2.
[3] Morison.
[4] Thayer, *N. T. Lexicon*.

6 ¶ [v] Now when Jē'ṣus was in [w] Bĕth'ă-nў, in the house of Sī'mon the leper,

v For vers. 6–13, see Mark 14. 3–9 & John 12. 1–8. Cp. Luke 7. 37–39. *w* ch. 21. 17. John 11. 18.

John. Matthew and Mark turn back, as is frequently done by historians, to what occurred three days before, because it explains in part the treason of Judas, which culminates at this time in his offering to betray Jesus for thirty pieces of silver. This helps the Jewish rulers to decide on what plan to take for gaining possession of Jesus and bringing him to trial. Hence the supper at Bethany is placed by Matthew between verses 5 and 14 of this chapter, as the logical connection between the two.

6. **Now when Jesus was in Bethany**, the home of Martha, Mary, and Lazarus. He had reached Bethany the evening before from Perea and Jericho, on his last journey to Jerusalem. Bethany means "House of Dates," or "Home of Comfort." Its modern name is *el' Azarîyeh*, "Place of Lazarus." **In the house of Simon the leper.** There were many Simons, and this one is distinguished from the others by the fact that he had been a leper. Of course he must have been free from it at this time, probably a monument of the healing power of Jesus. To him this would be a thanksgiving feast. "According to a tradition, he was the father of Lazarus; according to others, he was the husband of Martha, or Martha was his widow."

The Supper. From John (12 : 2) we learn that a dinner was given in honor of Jesus. It is

Triclinium, or Roman Supper Table.

called a supper, δεῖπνον, the principal meal of the day, corresponding to the modern late dinner in the evening It was held after sunset of the Jewish Sabbath, which ended with the setting sun. We must not think of a modern table, with chairs, as this scene is represented in many of the famous pictures, but we look upon a low, Eastern table, surrounded on three sides by couches or cushioned divans, "on which each guest reclines, lying on his left side and leaning on the left hand, with his head nearest the table, and his feet stretching back towards the ground. Each guest occupies a separate divan, or pillow." At and around the table we see Jesus, Lazarus, the twelve disciples, and the leading people of the village. The sisters Mary and Martha were there to serve, each in her own natural way. Looking upon the scene were "the common people" (John 12: 9), among them probably some who had come to attend the Passover. In Oriental fashion they gathered in the house to look on, attracted by the desire to see Jesus, the great prophet, and the man whom he had raised from the dead.

Practical Lessons. (1) "Matthew Henry notes with pleasure that though Jesus knew his death was so near, and shrank from it so much, he did not abandon himself to melancholy retirement, but with holy cheer took his part in social festivities." Eating together may transfigure the physical by the spiritual, and the mealtimes of the family become times of special blessing.

(2) It is interesting to note the three pictures of the Bethany home, presented to us in the Gospels. (1) Martha working, Mary choosing the good part (Luke 10: 38–42). (2) Mary and Martha at the death of their brother Lazarus (John 11: 20–44), and (3) the picture of the family at this feast. There is a change in the attitude of these two sisters in respect to their diverse methods of service. Four months before, Martha complained to Jesus that her sister did not help her (Luke 10: 38–42). In the meantime her brother Lazarus had died, and been restored by Jesus; and although Martha is even more busy than before, yet she is restful and peaceful in her work. She is not cumbered with her business, nor angry with Mary, nor casting reflections on Jesus. She has learned something in the day of sorrow and darkness. She has not lost any of her power to serve, but the manner of her service has been transformed. Thus the two sisters each gained something of the virtues of the other. "What about Mary? Where is she? She, too, is at the

7 There there came unto him a woman having an alabaster box cruse of very exceeding precious ointment, and she poured it on upon his head, as he sat at meat at meat.

old business again, only with deeper love and sympathy than before. This is a lovely picture of Mary." "She is again at the feet of Jesus, a

Spikenard (*Nardostachys Jatamansi*) from which the ointment of Nard was made.

golden link which unites the three pictures in one, and reveals the secret of Mary's life." [1]

> "Be Martha still in deed and good endeavor,
> In faith like Mary, at his feet forever." [2]

(3) We see what a delightful thing it is to have Jesus in our homes. These days in the Bethany home were glorified days, like those in which the sacred ark was in the house of Obed-edom. His presence is a perpetual benediction and inspiration. What a change his presence would make in some families! [3]

7. **There came unto him a woman.** This woman was Mary, the sister of Martha and Lazarus (John 12 : 3), [4] not the woman in Luke 7, "who was a sinner," and anointed the feet of Jesus, almost two years before in Galilee. **Having an alabaster box**, rather, a cruse or flask. "Literally, *an alabaster*, just as we call a drinking vessel made of glass *a glass*. Pliny compares these vessels to a closed rosebud." [5] These *alabasters* were usually made of "the Oriental or onyx alabaster, with long, narrow necks, which let the oil escape drop by drop, and could easily be broken. But the shape and material varied. Herodotus (3 : 20) mentions an '*alabastron* of fragrant oil' — the precise expression in the text — sent among other royal gifts of gold and purple by Cambyses to the king of Ethiopia." [6] The Jews, like all the other civilized ancient peoples, made much use of fragrant ointment, often rare and of great price; and the flasks which contained it were of great variety as to material and shape. [7] **Of very** (exceedingly) **precious ointment**, a liquid perfume, more like an oil, as oil of roses, than the thicker compositions we commonly know as ointment. John (12 : 3) says there was a pound of it (a Roman pound of twelve ounces). He also says it was ointment of spikenard, literally, "ointment of pistic nard," "pistic" meaning either "genuine" or "liquid." It was *pure nard*, like attar of roses, unadulterated, in full strength. Its costliness made it peculiarly liable to adulteration. Spikenard (spiked-nard) was a plant closely allied to valerian, and now found in the Himalayan region. The odor is described as resembling that of a mixture of valerian and patchouli. [8] It was so strong that it filled the whole house with its odor (John). *Very precious.* Horace offers to give a cask of wine for a very small box of it; *Nardi parvus onyx eliciet cadum. — Odes*, IV. xii. 17. [6] It was worth 300 Roman pence, denarii, silver coins worth 15 to 17 cents each. Hence the whole was worth about $50, or $300 to $400 in our time, a penny, or denarius, being then equal to a day's wages (Matt. 20: 2). Compare the attar of roses, made at Ghazipoor in Hindustan, and which requires 400,000 full-grown roses to produce one ounce, and which sells when pure, in the

Silver Denarius of Tiberius.

English warehouses, as high as $100 an ounce, or $1200 for as much as Mary's pound of spikenard. [9] The cost would support a family a year, and was half as much again as the disciples thought would be required to feed the five thousand near Bethsaida.

[1] G. Campbell Morgan, in *Northfield Echoes.*

[2] Coleridge.

[3] Dr. A. J. Gordon's experience in *How Christ Came to Church.* What would be the effect should we realize "If Christ Came to Our Home"? See article on this subject by F. N. Peloubet, in *The Loom of Life.*

[4] In Longfellow's *Divine Tragedy* is a picture of Martha and Mary. Jacox's *Side Lights*, "Martha and Mary." J. R. Miller's booklet, *Mary of Bethany.*

[5] Prof. M. R. Vincent, *Word Studies.*

[6] *Cambridge Bible.*

[7] Prof. J. A. Broadus.

[8] See *Century Dictionary.*

[9] See *American Cyclopedia.*

8 But when his disciples saw *it*, they had indignation, saying, To what purpose is this waste?

9 For this ointment might have been sold for much, and [x] given to the poor.

x Cp. John 13. 29.

Poured it on his head, and also upon his feet (John). Anointing the head of a Rabbi at such feasts was not an unusual honor; but anointing the feet was unusual, and expressed the tenderest, most humble, most reverential, unutterable affection. "It was a luxury, Jeremy Taylor says, no emperor till Nero ever indulged in. In India these anointings with fragrant oils and perfumes are largely practised after bathing, and especially at feasts and marriages, so that the act of Mary was not something embarrassing and peculiar, but only the very highest form of a service which was expected and welcome."[1] Mary not only anointed Jesus, but she took "woman's chief ornament" and devoted it to wiping the travel-stained feet of her teacher (John). She devoted the best she had to even the least honorable service for him. John says that "the house was filled with the odor," as indeed the church and the world have been filled with the odor of this loving deed. This act of Mary's was the expression of her love and devotion to her Saviour. No words could express her feelings. No common deed could tell him how deep was her gratitude, how strong her desire to honor him, how loving her sympathy, how great was her faith in him, as the Messiah, the Redeemer of the world.

8. **When his disciples saw it, they had indignation.** John tells us that Judas Iscariot was the leader and the mouthpiece of the indignation against Mary. The plausible arguments of a positive man, wearing a mask of virtue, and speaking in behalf of some of the very principles their Master had enforced, had brought some of the disciples into sympathy with his feeling of indignation.

NOTE that the apostles do not hesitate to record even those actions which are discreditable to themselves. They hide nothing. And this is one mark of the divine authorship of the Gospels. Men would naturally have concealed the faults of their saints and heroes "for the good of the cause," as the artist painted Alexander the Great's portrait with a finger over the scar on his face. These records are a comfort, also; for what Christian could find hope for himself, or for his age, if all the early saints had been perfect?

To what purpose is this waste? This useless squandering of what could have been used to a better purpose. "Waste" is literally "perdition." So Judas is afterwards called "a son of perdition," a man who had utterly wasted his life. The other disciples were sincere, but had too narrow or distorted a vision as to what were real values. But Judas, we are told by John, thought the nard was wasted, because its price did not flow into his treasury, where he could steal it. Its value was two and a half times greater than the thirty pieces of silver (shekels) he received for betraying his Lord.

9. **Sold for much. Three hundred pence. And given to the poor.** This was the real thought of the others, but the pretence of Judas.

NOTE. (1) Narrowness of experience and of vision often leads to false and harsh criticism of others. A man, says Emerson, is like a bit of Labrador spar, which has no lustre as you turn it, till you come to a certain angle; then it shows deep and beautiful colors. There are many actions which from a scientific point of view, or from a pecuniary or worldly standpoint, seem to have no lustre, no value, but which when turned to the angle of feeling, of motive, of love, of moral effect, are full of divine beauty and heavenly color.

(2) What is regarded as waste depends largely on the standard of judgment. Money values, utility for the necessities of existence, are not the only standards of value. "Actions which have no immediate results are pronounced by such persons to be mere sentiment and waste, while in fact they redeem human nature and make life seem worth living."[2] They enrich the whole nature. I believe that often we misunderstand the needs of the poor, who often hunger more for something to satisfy their tastes and mental or spiritual longings than for food. "The German poet is often cited for his remark that the Cow of Isis is to some the divine symbol of knowledge, to others but the milch cow, only regarded for the pounds of butter she will yield."[3]

(3) Beware of the arguments of a bad man in behalf of a good cause. It was the betrayer of Christ who here argued for the poor. Compare Virgil's story of the Trojan horse. *Timeo Danaos et dona ferentes:* "I fear the Greeks even when bringing gifts."

This is "the second time that Mary's intense devotion to Jesus brings blame upon her." "But it is not a little rude in guests thus to criticise one of the ladies of the house; and once again Jesus defends Mary. . . . The first motive that

[1] Richard Glover. [2] Prof. Marcus Dods. [3] Jacox's *Secular Annotations.*

10 When But [y] Jē'sus understood *it*, he perceiving it said unto them, Why trouble ye the woman? for she hath wrought a good work upon me.

11 For [z] ye have the poor always with you; but [a] me ye have not always.

12 For in that she hath poured this ointment on upon my body, she did *it* [b] for my to prepare me for burial.

13 Verily I say unto you, Wheresoever [c] this gospel shall be preached in the whole world, *there* shall that also this, that which this woman hath done shall be told spoken of [d] for a memorial of her.

y ch. 16. 8. *z* Deut. 15. 11. *a* ch. 9. 15. See John 7. 33. *b* John 19. 40. *c* Cp. ch. 24. 14. *d* Acts 10. 4.

prompted him was his chivalry."[1] Hence he says, in sharp rebuke, "Let her alone; why trouble ye her?" (Mark.)

First Defence: The Principle underlying her Act was Good. 10. **When Jesus understood it.** The R. V. is much more correct here, "But Jesus perceiving it," at the moment; he knew their thoughts at once; while the common version seems to suggest that it took him some time to learn what the grumbling was about. **She hath wrought a good work upon me.** The Greek adjective implies something more than "good," a *noble*, an *honorable* work. "The spirit which offers precious things, simply because they are precious, . . . is a good and just feeling, and as well-pleasing to God and honorable to men, as it is beyond all dispute necessary to the production of any great work in the kind with which we are at present concerned." "Costliness is an external sign of love and obedience." "It is not the church we want, but the sacrifice; not the emotion of admiration, but the act of adoration; not the gift, but the giving."[2]

It was the act of a noble soul expressing its noblest emotions. The form it took is expressed in ver. 12, **she did it for my burial**; R. V., "to prepare me for burial." Mark says, "She hath anointed my body beforehand for the burying." Not that she had purposed this, but it was so in effect. Or she, fearing his death was near at hand, had honored him living, lest she should have no opportunity after he was dead. We would not hesitate to use this costly tribute for the dead or think it extravagant. It is for the dead. It is the last tribute of affection. Why should we hesitate to do for the beloved living what is natural and proper for our beloved dead?

"Jesus was at a crisis of his life when it was of the utmost value to him to know that he had won a place in a human heart."[3]

Second Defence: The Act did not Interfere with Gifts to the Poor. 11. **For ye have the poor always with you.** They would have plenty of opportunities to aid them; and the more they did for their Master, the more they would do for the poor, for the poor are left in his stead, and through them would be expressed the increased love of the Master. It is the want of *love*, not of money, that allows any poor to suffer; so that all gifts to Christ which increase our love will increase the gifts to the poor. The Marys are a thousand times more helpful to the poor than those who belong to the order of Judas.[4] **But me ye have not always.** The opportunity of making such expressions of love directly to Jesus would not occur again. Hereafter they could through all generations express it in gifts to his poor.

Mary's Reward: Perpetual Usefulness. 13. **Wheresoever this gospel shall be preached.** The words here show that our Lord expected his Gospel to be diffused throughout the world. Her act expressed the nature of the Gospel and some of its fruits. **In the whole world.** This story has been told in every known tongue, and is now being related in more than three hundred and fifty different languages to every great nation on the earth. No monuments, not even the Pyramids, are as enduring. She is still pouring out the precious nard in an endless living stream, the fragrance thereof still is filling human hearts and lives all over the world. Like Abel, "being dead, she yet speaketh." **For a memorial of her.** By which her deed shall be remembered; not to glorify her, but to continue her usefulness, to give immortality to her character and influence.

Practical Suggestions.[5] (1) "The first condition of all really great moral excellence is a spirit of genuine self-sacrifice and self-renunciation."[6]

[1] Prof. Adeney. [2] Ruskin. [3] *Int. Crit. Com.*

[4] "Little Dorrit turned at the door to say 'God bless you!' She said it very softly, but perhaps she may have been as audible above — who knows? — as a whole cathedral choir." — *Little Dorrit*, chap. 14.

[5] See Tennyson's *In Memoriam*, xxxii., on precious things given to Christ. Trench's *Westminster Sermons*, "The Prodigalities of Love." Professor Ely's *Social Law of Service*, especially the last part of chap. 4.

[6] Lecky's *History of European Morals*, ii. p. 155.

14 ¶ [e] Then one of the twelve, who was called [f] Jū'das Ĭs-căr'ĭ-ot, went unto the chief priests,

e For vers. 14–16, see Mark 14. 10, 11 & Luke 22. 3–6. Cp. John 13. 2, 27, 30. f ch. 10. 4 & 27. 3. Acts 1. 16. Cp. John 6. 71 & 12. 4.

"It is not the deed we do,
Though the deed be never so fair,
But the love that the dear Lord looketh for,
Hidden with holy care
In the heart of the deed so fair."

(2) Expressions of feelings deepen and strengthen them, — not increasing the mere emotions, but cherishing and enriching the character and the nature from which they flow. The tree cannot grow unless it expresses its life in leaves. We learn thus how to increase our graces. Such is the meaning of "this song without words struck by the woman's hand as from a lyre of alabaster."

(3) There is great value in these expressions to those that receive them. Sympathy with the poor expressed by gifts is worth many times the same gifts without the sympathy. There is great hunger in the world for expressions of affection; and the world would be vastly happier if the affection really existing between parents and children, husbands and wives, pastors and people, teachers and taught, were more often and more fully expressed.

(4) "No shattered box of ointment
We ever need regret,
For out of disappointment
Flow sweetest odors yet."

(5) An original writer says: "If my friends have alabaster boxes full of the fragrant perfume of sympathy and affection laid away, which they intend to break over my body, I would rather they would bring them out in my weary and troubled hours, and open them, that I may be refreshed and cheered by them while I need them. . . . I would rather have a plain coffin without a flower, a funeral without a eulogy, than life without the sweetness of love and sympathy. . . . Flowers on the coffin cast no fragrance backward on the weary road."

"What use for the rope, if it be not flung
Till the swimmer's grasp to the rock has clung?
What worth is Eulogy's blandest breath
When whispered in ears that are hushed in death?
No! No! if you have but a word of cheer,
Speak it while I am alive to hear." [1]

(6) "The question is not between God's poor and his house; it is not between God's house and his Gospel: it is between God's house and ours. I say this emphatically, that a tenth part of the expense which is sacrificed in domestic vanities, if not absolutely and meaninglessly lost in domestic discomforts and incumbrances, would, if collectively offered and wisely employed, build a marble church for every town in England, such as would be a joy and a blessing even to pass near it in our daily walks." [2]

Wednesday, April 5.

III. THE CONSPIRACY OF JUDAS, vers. 14–16.

14. **Then**, as a consequence of the reproof he received at the supper at Bethany, and at that time he began to form the plan which he carried out two or three days later. **Judas Iscariot.**[3] See on ch. 10: 4. Judas was doubtless angry at the reproof he had received. He was disappointed in his desire to gain money. He probably was still more disappointed in his hope of being treasurer of a great kingdom which would fail if Jesus died. His avaricious spirit was excited and repelled by the praise of Jesus for the spirit of Mary, so opposed to his own. These feelings doubtless grew and deepened by brooding over them during the two or three days which may have elapsed between the anointing by Mary and this plot to betray Jesus. **Went unto the chief priests.** It is uncertain when he went. It is not probable that he would go to a public meeting of the rulers, but would naturally see some of "the chief priests and captains" privately. It may have been early in the week, but as they were still inquiring on Tuesday evening how they

1 Margaret Preston's *Poems*, "Ante Mortem."

2 Ruskin's *Seven Lamps of Architecture*, "The Spirit of Sacrifice."

3 On the evolution of the character of Judas, see in George Eliot's *Romola* the development of the Greek Tito from a youth bright, beautiful, and full of promise, to a selfish traitor to his father, his home, and his country, through the love of money. This development is finely set forth in Dr. Hillis' *Great Books as Life-Teachers*.

Edersheim's *Life of Christ*, pp. 472–478, "A Study of Judas."

JUDAS GREW WORSE under the best influences, the best teaching, the perfect example, as dead trees decay most rapidly under the power of the sunshine and rain, which give vigor and growth to living trees. Weeds grow in the richest soil and in the brightest sunshine. The result is that at last he opens the door of his heart to Satan and henceforth is under his influence, and, like the swine of Gadara driven down over the precipice into the sea, so Judas now rushes headlong into the depths of crime and infamy and ruin.

15 And said, *unto them,* What will ye willing to give me, and I will deliver him unto you? And they [g] covenanted with weighed unto him for [h] thirty pieces of silver.

16 And from that time he sought opportunity to [i] betray him. deliver him *unto them.*

17 ¶ [j] Now on the [k] first *day* of the *feast of* unleavened bread the disciples came to Jē'sus, saying, unto him, Where wilt thou that we prepare make ready for thee to eat the passover?

18 And he said, Go into the city to such a man, and say unto him, [l] The Master saith, [m] My time is at hand; I will keep the passover at thy house with my disciples.

g Zech. 11. 12. Cp. Gen. 23. 16 & Jer. 32. 9. *h* ch. 27. 3, 9. Ex. 21. 32. *i* See ch. 20. 18, 19. *j* For vers. 17–19, see Mark 14. 12–16 & Luke 22. 7–13. *k* Ex. 12. 18. *l* Cp. ch. 23. 8 (for mg.). See John 11. 28. *m* Cp. ver. 45 & John 7. 6, 8, 30 & 8. 20 & 13. 1 & 17. 1.

might take Jesus by craft or stratagem, it is quite possible that he saw them some time on Wednesday.

15. **Covenanted with him.** Rather as R. V., "weighed unto him," actually gave him the money agreed upon. Money went by weight.

Silver Stater of Augustus.

A piece of silver, for 30 of which Judas betrayed his master.

Thirty pieces of silver. Silver shekels, each worth four denarii, usually translated pence. A shekel was therefore worth sixty-four to sixty-eight cents; in all about twenty dollars, the usual price of a slave.

NOTE the contrast between the spirit of Judas and that of Mary. Against the background of his covetousness and the horrid, hateful brood it brought forth is seen in brighter colors the beautiful and attractive spirit of love.

16. **From that time he sought opportunity.** It may be that the consultation on Tuesday evening was to discover by what stratagem this opportunity could be gained. Wednesday would doubtless be spent in this search.

WHAT JESUS WAS DOING THIS DAY. Nothing is recorded concerning Jesus on this day. Since he went to Bethany Tuesday night, and we hear of him there on Thursday afternoon, it is probable that he remained there on Wednesday with his friends, preparing for the great events which were to follow, "a Sabbath to his soul before its great agony."

Thursday Afternoon and Evening.

IV. THE LAST SUPPER, vers. 17–30.

PLACE. An upper room in Jerusalem.

PARALLELS. Mark 14: 12–26; Luke 22: 7–30; John 13: 1–30. Combining the accounts, we will consider the events in their order.

FIRST. PREPARATIONS FOR THE PASSOVER, vers. 17–19. These are given in more detail in Mark and Luke.

17. **The first day . . . of unleavened bread.** That is, of the Passover festival, during which only unleavened bread was used. The first great day of the Passover, which lasted a week, began at sunset on the evening after the 14th (Thursday, in A. D. 30), which by the Jewish reckoning was the beginning of the 15th (Friday, April 7), when the regular Passover supper was eaten. **The disciples came to Jesus,** some time on Thursday, **saying, . . . Where wilt thou that we prepare for thee to eat the passover?** A room was needed, with tables surrounded by couches, for the Passover must be eaten reclining, since it was a canon that even the poorest must partake of that supper in a reclining attitude, to indicate rest, safety, and liberty.[1] Then there must be obtained unleavened bread, bitter herbs, wine, and a paschal lamb, which must be slain in the Temple between three and five o'clock,[2] and cooked in a private house.

18. **Go into the city to such a man.** They were to recognize him by his carrying a pitcher of water (Mark). The reason why he was designated thus, rather than by name, "was probably to prevent Judas from knowing the place in time to betray our Lord at the Passover meal." Either Jesus had arranged beforehand with this man (Prof. Gilbert), or (as most) Jesus knew by divine foreknowledge what would take place. Without doubt the man was a disciple. "It *may* have been in the home of Mary, the mother of Mark.

[1] Edersheim, *Life of Christ.*

[2] Josephus' *Wars*, vi. 9: 3.

19 And the disciples did as Jē'sus [had] appointed them; and they made ready the passover.

20 [n] Now when [the] even was come, he [sat down was sitting at meat] with the twelve disciples;

n For vers. 20–24, see Mark 14. 17–21. Cp. Luke 22. 14, 21–23 & John 13. 21–26.

. . . Then it is not improbable that the outpouring of the Holy Spirit at Pentecost was in the same room (Acts 1 : 13). . . . We know that it was in the house of Mary that many gathered to pray for the release of Peter from prison, and this may well have been in the same upper room (Acts 12 : 12)."[1]

19. **The disciples did as Jesus had appointed them.** They found "a large upper room furnished and ready," where they made all necessary preparations.

SECOND. ASSEMBLING IN THE UPPER ROOM. 20. **When . . . even was come.** Jesus must have started late in the afternoon, and reached the upper room about sunset, which would be at that season at a little after six. **He sat down,** was sitting, **with the twelve.** They reclined on couches arranged on three sides of a low table, resting on the left arm, so that the right was free. Their feet were extended away from the table, and were not under it, as with us. The mediæval pictures give us a wrong impression, as, for instance, Leonardo da Vinci's famous Last Supper.

THIRD. THE STRIFE TO BE FIRST. This contention is recorded only in Luke 22 : 24–30. The strife probably began when the disciples were assembling in the upper room, and were about to take their places at the table. Even in this most solemn hour, more solemn than they realized, there arose a contention among the disciples as to who should be the greatest, probably with reference to the places of honor and nearness to Jesus, with an outlook toward the highest places in the new kingdom which was soon to begin. Also, because no one was willing to take upon himself the servile duty of washing the travel-soiled feet of the company. It is quite possible that those sought the best places who had received unusual honors, as the three who had been selected for the Transfiguration, Peter, with the keys, Judas, the treasurer, James and John, who had asked to be nearest the king. But, except in Judas' case, we may be sure that the best of motives were mingled in very large proportions with the unworthy ones, and that they wanted to be near him whom they loved, and to be most useful in the work of the kingdom.[2]

FOURTH. JESUS WASHES THE DISCIPLES' FEET. John 13 : 1–20. Just after all were seated. We have a very erroneous idea of the meaning of this action if we imagine that it was performed for a mere example of humility, or even as an illustration. It was simply a humble, menial service that ought to have been done by the disciples, but which they refused or neglected to do. "As sandals were ineffectual against the dust and heat of an Eastern climate, washing the feet on entering a house was an act both of respect to the company and of refreshment to the traveller." The disciples sat down to the meal without having their feet washed, after a hot and dusty walk. The Oriental bowl and pitcher make it difficult for one to wash his own feet, so that the disciples should have done it for one another, since they had no servants to do it for them. Jesus gave them ample time to come to a better mind. He waited till they were seated. Then he arose and performed the menial service himself. No wonder that the conscience-smitten disciples were amazed, and that Peter could not endure that Jesus should wash his feet.

A LESSON OF TRANSFIGURED SERVICE. Love to God and love to men transfigure the commonest service, as a gray and dreary cloud is transfigured by the rays of the setting sun. Much that a mother does for her child, a doctor or nurse for his patients, is very lowly service, that would be hard and repulsive but for love. It was such service that has made the names of Florence Nightingale, John Howard, and many others shine like stars in the sky.[3]

FIFTH. THE PASSOVER MEAL, AND EVENTS CONNECTED WITH IT, vers. 20–25. The Passover was the great festival of the Jewish year. (1) It was the anniversary of the birth of the Jewish nation. (2) It marked the divine favor and protection in preserving their first-born from destruction. The destroying angel *passed over* the houses on which the blood was sprinkled, or, as some take it, the Jehovah angel *passed over* and stood over the door, and shut out the destroying angel. (3) It commemorated their salvation

[1] Prof. Gilbert, *Student's Life of Jesus.*

[2] Many will recall the famous scene between Criemhilt and Brunhilt in the *Niebelungen Lied.* In the Middle Ages blood was shed at the very altar of St. John Lateran, in a furious dispute about precedence between an abbot and a bishop.

[3] This lesson is beautifully expressed in Murillo's famous painting of the *Angels in the Kitchen*, called also *The Miracle of San Diego*, in the Louvre. The poem, *If the dear Lord should send an angel down.* Mr. Gannett's *Blessed be Drudgery.* Lowell's *Vision of Sir Launfal.*

21 And as they did eat, he said, Verily I say unto you, that one of you shall betray me.

22 And they were exceeding sorrowful, and began every one of them to say unto him, Lord, is it I? every one, Is it I, Lord?

23 And he answered and said, He that dippeth his hand with me in the dish, the same shall betray me.

24 The Son of man goeth, even as it is written of him: but woe unto that man by whom the Son of man is betrayed! it had been good for that man if he had not been born.

o Cp. John 6. 70, 71. p Cp. John 13. 18. q ver. 54, 56. Mark 9. 12. Luke 18. 31 & 24. 25-27, 46. Acts 17. 2, 3 & 26. 22, 23. 1 Cor. 15. 3. 1 Pet. 1. 10, 11. r ch. 18. 7. s John 17. 12.

from the bondage of Egypt, and their separation to a holy life. (4) The sacrifice acknowledged their sin and need of atonement, (5) which they must apply to themselves by faith. (6) The absence of leaven denoted their putting away sin. (7) The bitter herbs were a token of their repentance. (8) The whole foreshadowed the coming of their Redeemer.

21. **And as they did eat**, the Passover.[1] The Lord's Supper was instituted later in the evening. **He** (Jesus) **said, . . . one of you shall betray me.** John says he was "troubled in spirit."[2] The Saviour's heart was touched with the ingratitude of one for whom he had done so much, and who was even now pretending to be a friend by eating with him. Judas had already agreed to betray him for thirty pieces of silver; but this announcement (1) gave Judas opportunity to repent. (2) "The words would seem to have been intentionally vague, as if to rouse some of those who heard them to self-questioning," whether by their contention they were not in danger of falling. (3) The announcement showed the disciples that Jesus was not taken by surprise, but knew all that was before him. It was part of the great plan of redemption, foretold ages before (ver. 24).

22. **They were exceeding sorrowful**, because their loved Master was to be betrayed; because one of their number should fall so low as to be a traitor; and because they were afraid they might be swept onward into doing what now their souls hated. **To say unto him.** To Jesus, as well as to one another (Luke 22: 23). "The interrogative particle employed (μήτι) is of such a nature that a negative answer is confidently anticipated. *Surely it is not I, is it?* All their want of nobility, all their failure in love, all the depth of their selfishness, all the weakness of their faith, —

> 'Every evil thought they ever thought,
> Every evil word they ever said,
> Every evil thing they ever did,'

all crowded upon their memories, and made their consciences afraid. *None* of them seemed safe from *anything*."[3] **Is it I?** Better that question than "Is it *he?*"

23. **He that dippeth his hand with me in the dish.** This does "not point out the traitor, but the treachery of the act."[4] It is one who dips in the same dish with me, one who by this act has pledged loyalty and protection even at the cost of life, who will sink to the depth of infamy by betraying me. Knives and forks and plates for each guest were unknown. The food was piled in a great circular dish, over it was poured the broth, and the guests with their fingers dipped a piece of meat or of barley cake into the broth, and thus ate it.[5]

24. **The Son of man goeth as it is written of him**, in such passages as Ps. 22 and Isai. 53. He must die if he would save the world. His death was not the result of accident, nor controlled by demons, but "he was delivered up by the determinate counsel and foreknowledge of God" (Acts 2: 23). **But woe unto that man**, etc.

[1] For the Passover, see Edersheim's *Life of Christ*, and Edersheim's *Temple and Its Services*, pp. 177-231.

[2] Compare Shakespeare's account of Brutus killing Cæsar, his most intimate friend.

> "For Brutus, as you know, was Cæsar's angel;
> This was the most unkindest cut of all;
> For when the noble Cæsar saw HIM stab,
> Ingratitude, more strong than traitor's arms,
> Quite vanquished him: then burst his mighty heart."

[3] Farrar, whose *Life of Christ in Art*, "The Last Supper," is suggestive. [4] *Int. Crit. Com.*

[5] In Scott's *The Talisman*, King Richard of England and his knights were entertained by Saladin, but when the Templar, who had just committed a foul murder, was about to drink, ere the cup reached his lips the sabre of Saladin, "left its sheath as lightning leaves the cloud," and smote off the Templar's head. Saladin had not intended to punish thus, but he said: "If I had permitted him to taste of my cup, how could I, without incurring the brand of inhospitality, have done him to death as he deserved? Had he murdered my father, and afterward have partaken of my food and my bowl, not a hair of his head could have been injured by me."

25 Then / And Jū'das, which betrayed him, answered and said, Master, is / Is it I? *t* Rab'bi? He said / saith unto him, *u* Thou hast said.

26 ¶ *v* And as they were eating, Jē'sus took bread, and *w* blessed, *it*, and brake *it*; and gave *it* / he gave to the disciples, and said, Take, eat; *x* this is my body.

27 And he took the / a cup, and *y* gave thanks, and gave *it* to them, saying, Drink ye all of it;

28 For / for *x* this is my blood *z* of the new testament, / covenant, which is shed for *a* many *b* for the / unto remission of sins.

29 But I say unto you, I will not drink henceforth of this fruit of the vine, until that day when I drink it new with you *c* in my Father's kingdom.

t ver. 49. See John 1. 38. *u* ver. 64. See Luke 22. 70. *v* For vers. 26–29, see Mark 14. 22–25 & Luke 22. 18–20 & 1 Cor. 11. 23–25. *w* See ch. 14. 19. *x* 1 Cor. 10. 16. Cp. John 6. 53. *y* See ch. 15. 36. *z* Ex. 24. 8. Cp. Zech. 9. 11 & Heb. 13. 20. *a* See ch. 20. 28. *b* Mark 1. 4. Cp. Luke 1. 77. *c* Cp. ch. 13. 43.

"This is not a malediction, in the sense of a wish or a prayer that this vengeance may follow the traitor, but a solemn announcement of the divine judgment."[1] **Good for that man if he had not been born.** Such a life was not worth living. He had so resisted every motive and influence that could make him better that there was no hope left for him.

25. **Judas, . . . said, . . . is it I?** He did not dare to keep silence, for that would have been suspicious. At this point Satan took possession of Judas; he saw that Jesus knew of his treachery, and he went out from the company of disciples to betray Jesus to the chief priests. It is well that he went, that there might be no discordant element in the atmosphere of peace and love in this last meeting of the Master with his disciples. It was made easier for him to go by the last words of Jesus, bidding him do quickly what he purposed to do (John 13 : 26, 27).

Sixth. Institution of the Lord's Supper. 26. **And as they were eating**, toward the close of the Passover feast, **Jesus took bread**, the thin cake of unleavened bread, **and blessed it**, "invoked blessings," "consecrated with solemn prayers." **Take, eat**, make it a part of yourselves. **This is my body**, represents my body, symbolizes my body, does for your bodies just what my spiritual life does for your souls. "Any insistence on the literal meaning is contrary to linguistic laws and usages."[1] No one imagines that Christ was a literal door, or vine, or lamb, or shepherd, or path, though Jesus says he is each of these. The lamb of which they had partaken as a sacrifice for sin was to be fulfilled as the sacrifice of the Lamb of God. The literal eating of Christ's body would be of no value whatever. We are not changed into what we eat. "What lion eats becomes lion." Epictetus says that sheep eat grass, but it is wool that grows on their backs. We are not made holier by the best of food, even angels' food, or "the ambrosia and nectar of the gods." And a literal eating would degrade to a mere form a glorious and vital spiritual truth.

27. **And he took the cup.** Nowhere in the accounts of the Lord's Supper is the word "wine" used, but "cup," "fruit of the vine," so that fresh, unfermented grape juice fulfils all the conditions of this observance, and is even a more perfect symbol than fermented wine. **Gave thanks.** From the Greek word, εὐχαριστήσας, thus translated comes *The Eucharist; i. e., The Thanksgiving*, as the name of the Lord's Supper. Here is one of the wonders of Christ's love, that he could give thanks over the shedding of his own blood. How much more should we give thanks for that marvellous gift of his love, by which eternal life, the blessings of heaven, and everlasting communion with God become ours! **Drink ye all of it**, in order that all might participate in the blessings which it symbolized.

28. **This is my blood.** A type or emblem of his blood, his life (Lev. 17 : 14), which he laid down as the atonement for sin. **Of the new testament.** R. V., "covenant," which God was now confirming to man. The new covenant was that God would renew and save all who believed in Jesus. It is the new promise to men, the new Gospel dispensation, in which God has used his perfect wisdom in seeking to save the world from sin. **Which is shed for many.** Multitudes, not merely a few, are to be saved by Christ. **For the remission of sins**, including the forgiveness of sin, and the deliverance from the power of sin. Sin is to be put away entirely, so that the heart and life are clean and pure.

29. **I will not drink henceforth of this fruit of the vine.** This was to be his last meal with his disciples before he died. **Drink it new.**

[1] *Int. Crit. Com.*

30 [d] And when they had sung an/a hymn, [e] they went out into/unto [f] the mount of Ŏl′ĭveṣ.

d For vers. 30–35, see Mark 14. 26–31. *e* Luke 22. 39. John 18. 1. *f* See ch. 21. 1.

The Greek word expresses not fresh, newly made wine, but a new kind of wine, with a new meaning, no longer a memorial of death, but as part of the glorified festival of the Marriage of the Lamb, and of his final triumph over evil. **In my Father's kingdom**, in the kingdom of God completed, perfected. The Lord's Supper is a promise of victory for ourselves and the world. In celebrating it we eat and drink hope and courage, and keep in remembrance the power through which the triumph of the kingdom of God shall be attained.

SEVENTH. THE CLOSING HYMN. 30. **And when they had sung an hymn.** Probably the usual Psalms (115–118) with which the Passover closed, and which were very fitting to this occasion. "There is no reason to doubt that Jesus and his company followed the custom; and Jesus, as the celebrant, would not only sing, but lead in the singing."[1] **They went out into the mount of Olives**, at the foot of which was the garden of Gethsemane.

SIGNIFICANCE OF THE LORD'S SUPPER.

(1) The Lord's Supper is a sign of the new covenant of God with his people. Dr. Trumbull, in his latest book, *The Covenant of Salt*, gives some most helpful light from the Orient on this subject. Salt represents the blood, the life. Bread is a recognized representative of the flesh. "When Jesus spoke of bread as his flesh and his body, and of the fruit of the vine as his blood, he used terms that in his day, and earlier, were known in popular thought as representing the truth at the basis of the covenant, by which two became one in a merged common life." "Bread stood for the flesh, and the wine for the blood." "Bread is the basis of a common meal, as blood is the basis of a common life. Blood gives life; flesh as food gives sustenance. Salt represents life; bread represents sustaining food. In this light, those who share salt together are in a *life-sharing* covenant; those who share bread together *are sharers in a common growth*." "Wine as 'the blood of the grape' stands for the blood which is the life of all flesh; hence, the sharing of wine stands for the sharing of blood or life."[2] We see thus the strong and beautiful significance of this symbolic rite,— the oneness of each disciple with Jesus, in an everlasting covenant of life and love, of perfect spiritual union; our lives interwoven, his promises assured, our loyalty unbroken, our devotion as of friend to friend.[3]

(2) The Lord's Supper holds up to view the infinite love of God in sending his only begotten Son.

(3) It keeps in remembrance the person and life of Christ; what he was, what he did, what he said. It makes him a living reality. All the light and glory and love of Jesus, his whole personality, come before us in this ordinance.

(4) It is a memorial of a great deliverance, as was the Passover of the Jews. The supper follows the Passover feast, at the same table, in the same room, with the same bread and wine. It stands for a greater deliverance than that of the Israelites from Egyptian bondage. In the Revelation, the song of Moses and of the Lamb blend together in a common joy, but the note of the latter song is sweeter, louder, more universal, more divine.

(5) It teaches that Christ is the food of the soul. "As our food makes our bodies what they are, and becomes in us bones, and flesh, and sinew, and blood; as our intellectual food makes our minds what they are, coarse or refined, barbaric or cultured, disciplined or wild and riotous, so our spiritual companionship makes our spirits what they are." But Jesus as the food of the soul is vastly more than this. It is the impartation of life and strength to the soul, and to every faculty. "I live," says Paul, "yet no longer I, but Christ liveth in me." See Gal. 2:20; Col. 2:19. Thus we are led up to the sublime conception of a new human force working in humanity.

(6) It is a feast of fellowship, of brotherhood, of intimate communion with one another. Its celebration is a kind of *All Saints' Day*. We become one, not only with those around us, but with those who have gone before, to join the heavenly host.

"We are all here.
Even the dead, though dead so dear,
Fond memory, to her duty true,
Brings back their faded forms to view.
How lifelike through the mist of years
Each well-remembered form appears, —
They 're round us as they were of old, —
We are all here."

"For like as bread is made of a great number of grains of corn, ground, broken, and so joined together that thereof is made one loaf; and an

[1] See a strikingly eloquent and sympathetic portrayal of the scene in *Philochristus*, chap. xxviii.

[2] Dr. Trumbull's *Blood Covenant*, and *Covenant of Salt*.

[3] In the story of "Ali Baba and the Forty Thieves," in the *Arabian Nights*, Morgiana, the faithful slave girl, noticed that the disguised robber captain refused to taste of salt in her master's house, and she immediately suspected robbery.

31 Then saith Jē'sus unto them, All ye shall be *g* offended [because of in] me this night: for it is written, I will *h* smite the shepherd, and the sheep of the flock shall be scattered abroad.

g See ch. 5. 29 (for mg.). *h* Cited from Zech. 13. 7. Cp. John 16. 32.

infinite number of grapes be pressed together in one vessel, and thereof is made wine; likewise is the whole multitude of true Christian people spiritually joined, first to Christ, and then among themselves, together in one faith, one baptism, one Holy Spirit, one knot and bond of love." [1]

By eating together, we learn the blessing and power of the oneness of God's people. "Many as the waves, but one as the sea." Like the radii of a circle, the nearer we are to the centre, Christ, the nearer we are to one another.

(7) It teaches us a lesson of daily life. For the simplest and most common things of daily life are employed to teach us of Christ, so that all may understand, so that everything shall remind us of him, and the whole daily life may be sanctified and transfigured. Mr. Ruskin says that in nature the most common shapes and forms are the most beautiful, and that you can almost tell what lines or curves are the most beautiful by finding out those which God has created in the greatest abundance.

(8) It is a feast of triumph. It was instituted in close view of death, but with an outlook beyond death to life. It was as the sun triumphing over darkness. The Lord's Supper is a prophecy of Christ's second coming, of the perfect triumph of his kingdom; for we are to celebrate it till he comes. It contains a hope and a promise of victory and heaven. Our last view of Christ in the Gospels is not of death, but of an ever-living Saviour who once was dead, but now lives for evermore. It shows that we do not worship a dead Christ, but a living Christ, risen, sitting on the right hand of God, leading the hosts of Christendom. It is the morning star. It is like the music of the unseen Highland regiment coming to relieve the siege of Lucknow.

(9) It is an invitation to all to come and be saved. It is the church holding up the banner of redemption that all the world may see.[2]

(10) We ought to make the Lord's Supper the most helpful and important service of the church.[3]

V. FAREWELL DISCOURSES, vers. 31–35.

TIME. Late Thursday evening, April 6.

PLACE. The upper room in Jerusalem.

PARALLELS. Mark 14 : 27-31; Luke 22 : 31-34; John 13 : 36–38.

31. **Then saith Jesus.** At the close of the supper, probably after the singing of the hymn, but before they had left the room. **All ye shall be offended because of me,** σκανδαλισθήσεσθε ἐν ἐμοὶ, ye shall be made to stumble, and fall on my account. What is to take place to-night will be so strange, so terrible, so surprising, so contrary to your expectations, that you will be taken unawares; your faith will receive a shock, you will yield to sudden temptation, and forsake me.

For it is written, in Zech. 13: 7. This is a Messianic prophecy in which God's people, at the

[1] Arbp. Cranmer, on the *Lord's Supper*. "The Germans have a term, "*Tafelhähig*," worthy to sit at the royal table, a high distinction. It means a long line of distinguished ancestry, pure blood, or high service to the state. Sitting at the same table elevates one, as it were, to a fraternal relation with the host, making of them one family. In the Lord's Supper we sit at the table of him who is Lord of lords and King of kings. Let not the prince presume at this table to jostle and push the beggar." — Prof. R. T. Ely, LL. D., whose *Social Law of Service*, "Baptism and the Lord's Supper," is peculiarly rich and suggestive.

"The Holy Grail," in Tennyson, in Lowell, and in Wagner's *Lohengrin*. "The Holy Grail," in legend, is the cup out of which Jesus drank wine at the last supper with his disciples.

"If a man
Could touch or see it, he was healed at once,
By faith, of all his ills. But then the times
Grew to such evil that the holy cup
Was caught away to heaven, and disappeared."
— Lowell, *Vision of Sir Launfal*.

So it will ever be if the Church forget its meaning of fellowship.

[2] Dr. Oliver Wendell Holmes once compared the world to a ship loaded with humanity, and sinking in the waves; while the evangelical church people had got out of it into their little boats, and were singing with all their might "*We are safe*," as they rowed lustily to the shore. But that is no true picture of the true church, whose shout is not only "*We are safe*," but "*Here is the way of safety for all. Come and be saved* that you may bring the whole shipload of humanity to the shores of the kingdom of God."

[3] THE PALACE BEAUTIFUL, of Bunyan's *Pilgrim's Progress*, is the most perfect picture of the Church and its ordinances, in all literature. The lions in the way before his coming; the porter, Watchful, welcoming the pilgrim at the door; the examination by the gentle maidens, Piety, Prudence, and Charity, with their discourse at the supper; the sleeping in the Chamber of Peace; the study of the records of the place; the vision of the Delectable Mountains; and the putting on of the armor for future warfare, make altogether a fitting picture of the "house built by the Lord of the hill for the relief and security of pilgrims."

32 But after I am risen again, raised up, *i* I will go before you into Găl'ĭ-lee.

33 But *j* Pē'tĕr answered and said unto him, Though all men If all shall be *g* offended because of in thee, yet will I I will never be offended.

34 *k* Jē'sus said unto him, Verily I say unto thee, That that this night, *l* before the cock crow, thou shalt deny me thrice.

35 *m* Pē'tĕr said saith unto him, Though Even if I should must die with thee, yet yet will I not deny thee. Likewise also said all the disciples.

36 *n* Then cometh Jē'sus with them *e* unto a place called Gĕth-sĕm'ă-nĕ, and saith unto the his disciples, Sit ye here, while I go and pray yonder. and pray yonder.

g See on ver. 31. *i* ch. 28. 7, 10, 16. Mark 16. 7. *j* Cp. Luke 22. 31, 33. *k* Luke 22. 34. John 13. 38. *l* ver. 75. *m* Luke 22. 33. John 13. 37. *n* For vers. 36–46, see Mark 14. 32–42 & Luke 22. 40–46. *e* See on ver. 30.

time when a fountain is to be opened to the people of Jerusalem for sin and uncleanness, are to be tried as by fire, and emerge like refined silver and gold. The apostles, when they left the upper room, were to be as helpless and stunned as **sheep of the flock**, when the **shepherd** was smitten down. **Shall be scattered abroad**, literally and spiritually. They forsook Jesus and fled, but they were still more bewildered in their minds.

32. **But after I am risen again.** Jesus always shows glimpses of the clear sky through the darkest night, though the disciples forget the promise too easily, and keep their eyes on the darkness. But at last the promise was remembered, and brought light and deliverance, as Christian was delivered from Giant Despair's dungeon by the key of Promise, which he had forgotten was in his possession. **I will go before you**, as leader and shepherd, **into Galilee**. This was fulfilled in due time.

33. **But Peter**, then the bold, impulsive, self-confident man. **Though all men shall be offended because of thee, yet I will** stand up alone, **I will never be offended**, the words of an affectionate, honest-hearted man, "thinking his present feelings to be as immovable as a rock." He added, "I will lay down my life for thee" (John), and "Lord, with thee I am ready to go both to prison and to death" (Luke). He did do these things, as he felt within himself that he could and would; but first there must be a bitter experience revealing to him his weakness, and transforming him into a new man.

34. **Verily I say unto thee.** Knowing you better than you know yourself, and knowing what is before you. **Before the cock crow**, better without the article, "before cock-crow." This occurred in the third of the four night watches, that is, between twelve and three o'clock in the morning. It was the early sign of the dawn. **Thou shalt deny me thrice**, disown me as your Lord and Master. How this was fulfilled is seen in verses 69–75.

35. **Peter said unto him**, "exceeding vehemently" (Mark), denying the charge. **Likewise also said all the disciples.** The others did not deny him, but they all forsook him and fled. They believed what they had said, but Peter was the most prominent and most confident.

Then came some of the most needed counsels and assurances, recorded by John in chapters 14 to 17.

Chapter 14 was spoken at the table.

Chapters 15 and 16, after they had risen from the table and were about to depart.

Chapter 17 records the parting prayer of Jesus in the upper room toward midnight. Jesus spent whole nights in prayer, but this is the longest one recorded.

VI. IN THE GARDEN OF GETHSEMANE, vers. 36–46.

TIME. Between midnight and one o'clock of Friday morning, April 7.

PLACE. The garden of Gethsemane, on the lower slope of the Mount of Olives, opposite Jerusalem.

PARALLELS. Mark 14: 32–42; Luke 22: 39–46; John 18: 1.

36. **Then cometh Jesus with them**, from the upper room in Jerusalem. The journey was probably between half past eleven and midnight. "Our Lord and his disciples went out of Jerusalem, passing through the gate at the north of the temple area, known then as the Sheep Gate, very near, if not exactly on the same spot as the modern St. Stephen's Gate. They then descended into the valley of the Kedron, which, though dry in summer, would at that time of the year be a winter torrent."[1] A little to the south, on the further side, was the enclosure of the garden. **Unto a place called Gethsemane.** "The word 'Gethsemane' signifies 'an oil press,' of which there were certain to be several in a locality then covered, as Mt. Olivet was, with olive trees."[1] "'Oil press' was the type of trial, distress, agony." "The present Gethsemane is about

[1] Canon Tristram.

37 And he took with him [o] Pē′tēr and [p] the two sons of Zĕb′ę-dee, and began to be sorrowful and very heavy. sore troubled.

38 Then saith he unto them, [q] My soul is exceeding sorrowful, even unto death: tarry abide ye here, and [r] watch with me.

o ch. 17. 1. *p* ch. 4. 21. *q* Cp. Ps. 42. 5, 6 & John 12. 27. *r* See ch. 24. 42.

three quarters of a mile from the wall of Jerusalem, is almost a square, 160 by 150 feet, and contains eight venerable olive trees." [1]

John calls it a garden. "An Eastern garden differs from ours, in that it is chiefly filled with fruit trees and fragrant shrubs, rather than with flower-beds; and shade, not order or bright colors, is what is chiefly studied in its construction." [2] From the fact that "Jesus ofttimes resorted thither with his disciples" (John 18 : 2), it is probable that it was a suburban pleasure ground, or belonged to some friend of Jesus who gave him the free use of it during his stay.

Sit ye here, at the entrance of the garden, **while I go and pray yonder**, deeper into the garden shades. Eight of the disciples remained here, as an outer guard against surprise and interruption, like the picket guards of an army. Professor Gilbert gives two probable reasons why Jesus withdrew to Gethsemane. "First, he did not wish to involve his friends in trouble, in whose house he had spent the evening; and second, he wished a secluded spot for prayer."

37. **He took with him Peter and the two sons of Zebedee**, James and John. These were the three who had seen his glory on the Mount of Transfiguration, and were best prepared to sympathize with him. These were the inner guard. Both guards were to watch and pray, lest they enter into temptation (ver. 41). They were his guard against intrusion. He must have this hour alone with God to prepare for what was coming. They were to watch *with him*, in sympathy with him against the same temptations for the answer of help. In this hour Jesus needed human sympathy, even while he must "tread the winepress alone." Three times he went to them during this season of prayer. The more loving the heart, the more helpful is fellowship and sympathy.[3] Every wise person accepts of all the sympathy and help he can get. To throw this away is to reject one of the best aids God has given us in our times of trial or of labor.[4]

> "*Alone*, that worn-out word, —
> Yet all that poets sing, and grief hath known
> Of hopes laid waste, knells in that word, Alone." [5]

THE INTENSITY OF HIS SORROW. **And began to be sorrowful and very heavy.** Note the various expressions used to describe his sorrow. *Heavy*, ἀδημονεῖν, from ἀ, *not*, and δῆμος, *at home*. The sorrow of a stranger in a strange land, a homesick grief, a deep distress.

38. **Exceeding sorrowful**, περίλυπος, from περί, *around about, surrounding*, and λύπη, *sorrow*; encompassed with sorrow, as with an atmosphere, or as with a besieging army. Mark (14 : 33) says he was *sore amazed*, ἐκθαμβεῖσθαι, from ἐκ, *utterly, entirely, out and out*, and θάμβος, *amazement*, utterly amazed, implying "that the disclosure of the sorrow came upon him, if not literally as a surprise, at least with new and unexpected force." He had a clearer vision of what lay before him. **Even unto death.** The sorrow was so heavy that it seemed as if it would crush him to death, like the barbarous *peine forte et dure*, commonly known as *pressing to death*, when great weights were "put upon the prostrate prisoner, till he pleaded or died." See on 24 : 9.

Luke (22 : 44) says he was *in an agony*, ἀγωνίᾳ, from the intense contests of the games where the athletes strove even to death. The Greek tense, aorist, "suggests a *growing intensity* in the struggle," so that *his sweat became as it were great drops of blood*. This is not unknown to medical men. "It is noteworthy that the circumstance is only mentioned by Luke the physician." This was the "strong crying and tears" of Heb. 5 : 7. All this was the expression of the inner spiritual conflict and sorrow. "A coarser infidelity has much to say about the shrinking of our Lord from death. Such weakness is pronounced unworthy," in contrast with many a martyr who has gone triumphantly to his cross, and many a hero to whom death has been "welcome as the sight of sky and stars to prisoned men." So it came to Jesus when he met his enemies and the cross. But no one slowly faces death alone, and sees it coming in horrible form, but feels its horrors, unless he is too stupid and dull to know what courage is. Compare Fitz-Greene Halleck's poem on *Marco Bozzaris*. But the fear of death was the smallest of the

[1] Edersheim. [2] Canon Tristram.

[3] Ruskin's *Modern Painters*, vol. v., "Peace," paragraph 9, 10, is excellent here.

[4] Sidney Lanier's *Poems*, "The Ballad of the Trees and their Master:"—

> "Into the woods my Master went,
> Clean forspent, forspent;
> Into the woods my Master came,
> Forspent with love and shame."

[5] Bulwer.

39 And he went a little farther, forward a little, and fell on his face, and *s* prayed, saying, O my Father, if it be possible, let *t* this cup pass away from me: *u* nevertheless, not as I will, but as thou will.

s Heb. 5. 7. *t* See ch. 20. 22. *u* ver. 42. John 5. 30 & 6. 38. Phil. 2. 8.

feelings that brought this weight of sorrow on Jesus. "Whether, as Holman Hunt represents, the cross threw its shadow back as far as the shop at Nazareth we do not know, for the record is silent. But we do know that the shadow of death lay across the whole of his public life, for we find it appearing in his words."[1] Nothing could be braver, more heroic, than the way Jesus bore his crucifixion. It was something "deadlier than death" that weighed on his soul, something more than ever came to mortal man.

THE CAUSES OF HIS SORROW. (1) The more highly organized any being is, and the more capable he is of the highest joy, so much the more is he sensitive to pain. Thus a musician is tortured by a discord unnoticed by others. Thus all pain, whether physical or spiritual, was more intense to Jesus than to others. His "physical organization, unblunted by one deviation from natural ways, undrugged by one excess, was surely capable of a range of feeling as vast in anguish as in delight." But Jesus never hesitated, never turned back from the way of the cross.

(2) "Into this one hour were crowded by prevision the combined horrors of the passion, its cruelty, its shame, its physical torment, its spiritual tortures."[2] What others had only heard of, he knew.

(3) He felt with the greatest intensity the sin of the world. The wickedness of Judas; the weakness of even his chosen ones, the best on earth; the crimes of the Jewish leaders soon to be wrought against himself; their measureless folly in rejecting their Messiah, their only hope; the terrible evils soon to come upon the whole nation; brought before his soul the most awful results of sin upon the human race. It was the unspeakable horror of a world throwing away heaven and hope, and trampling on the most radiant manifestation of love God himself could make.

(4) He saw in death much more than brief physical suffering. It was the penalty of sin, it was a symbol of spiritual death, of the worm that dieth not, and the fires that cannot be quenched, of all the agonies which flow from sin.

(5) "Jesus was in the prime of manhood; life was just opening before him; his soul was eager for work, and conscious of rare capability to perform it; his death was the end of all human hope of achievement."[2] At the same time his earthly career, in this dark hour, may have seemed to be a failure, if the future was veiled from his vision. Only a few disciples, instead of a glorious kingdom, and these few about to forsake him! Where were the fruits of his life? It was his hour of darkness, with the future veiled from his eyes. He was like one in the dust and smoke of the battle, unable for the moment to see the victory and the blessings which would follow.

(6) Dr. Schauffler says: "The great horror of Jesus in the garden arose not from fear of Calvary, but from fear of failure (through physical suffering) to reach Calvary, and so lose all for which he left heaven." This, no doubt, was one element in his agony, but it was intense in proportion as he felt the agony of the physical suffering which led to the danger of failure. It was a fearful crisis in his life.

(7) In some way, including several of the above, he was "bearing the sin of the world" (John 1: 29). "The unrighteousnesses of the world were, in some peculiar way, accumulated on his soul, and piled up to heaven like mountains upon mountains."[3] "The Lord had laid on him the iniquity of us all." Thus he was being wounded for *our* transgressions, bruised for *our* iniquities (Isa. 53: 5, 6).

39. **And fell on his face.** Mark, "fell on the ground;" Luke, "kneeled down;" *i. e.*, as in the East, with the head bowed forward to the ground. The natural position of agonizing prayer; because in that position no thought whatever need be given to the body, but mind and will may be wholly concentrated on the object of prayer. "When the flail of affliction is upon me, let me not be the chaff that flies in thy face, but the corn that lies low at thy feet."[4] **O my Father.** The fatherhood of God is the basis of our hope in prayer. If God is afar off, if he is merely a "bright spirit increate," a mere "power that makes for righteousness," or is entangled in the machinery of his laws, then prayer is useless. But if he is our Father, with a father's heart, a father's love, a father's power to use his laws and help his every child, then prayer has a meaning and a power. **If it be possible.** Observe the variation in expression. Matthew says, "If it be possible;" Mark, "All things are possible;" Luke, "If thou be willing." The spirit of the prayer is seen by combining the accounts. If it be possible to save men, and carry

[1] Dean G. A. Chadwick, D. D. [2] Lyman Abbott. [3] Morison. [4] Philip Henry.

40 And he cometh unto the disciples, and findeth them asleep, sleeping, and saith unto Pē′tẽr, What, could ye not watch with mé one hour?

41 *r* Watch and *r* pray, that ye *r* enter not into temptation: the spirit indeed is, is willing, but the flesh is, is weak.

42 He went away again the second time, Again a second time he went away, and prayed, saying, O my Father, if this cup may not, cannot pass away, from me, except I drink it, *x* thy will be done.

43 And he came again and found them asleep again: sleeping, for *y* their eyes were heavy.

44 And he left them again, and went away, again, and prayed the, a third time, saying again the same words.

r See on ver. 38. *v* 1 Pet. 4. 7. *w* ch. 6. 13. *x* ver. 39. See ch. 6. 10. *y* Luke 9. 32. *z* Cp. 2 Cor. 12. 8.

out the divine work of redeeming them in some other way than by his suffering and death. Might not God find some easier way? Then **let this cup pass from me.** "This hour," in Mark. So that he need not drink it.

THE CUP is that which holds something for one to drink. This cup was filled with the deadly sorrows described above, and all the sufferings which lay before him during the following hours, including the unspeakable agonies of the crucifixion. It was a bitter draught he dreaded to drink.

Nevertheless not as I will. Not as seems desirable now, and as I am asking now. **But as thou wilt.** What in your loving wisdom you see to be wise and best. This is my prayer and desire. I do not merely submit to your will, but desire it, pray for it. He could easily have escaped. He could have had the twelve legions of angels for his defence (Matt. 26 : 53). "Underneath that awful agony there lay, millions of fathoms deep, unmoved and immovable, the intense desire that his Father's wish and will should be done."[1] This prayer, "Thy will be done," contains the essence of faith: a faith that expects an answer, and calmly trusts God as to the kind of answer.

40. **And he cometh,** to the place where he had left the three to watch. He did this three times during this awful hour, apparently to come into touch with their human sympathy as they should watch and pray with him. **And findeth them asleep.** Luke, the physician, gives the cause: it was from sorrow. Their very grief, not stupidity nor indifference, made "their eyes heavy." We are to remember that it was very late, after midnight, long after their accustomed hour of sleep; they had been amid very exciting scenes, with their minds intensely strained, and now a reaction had come, of silent stillness and darkness. And yet we cannot help feeling that if they had had a deeper sympathy with Christ and a fuller realization of the crisis, they would have kept awake, and not been found sleeping on guard. Christ's gentle reproof implies this. **Saith unto Peter,** who had been so confident; who was the leader, with the most alacrity of all. **Could ye not watch . . . one hour?** How then can you endure, as you think you can, the terrible, long hours to come? It was a kindly warning to Peter against over-confidence. Peter, "the rock," had not yet become the hard, immovable rock. It was in the process of hardening.

"OBSERVE they forgot sorrow in sleep. Christ conquers it by prayer. Compare with the world's forgetfulness of sorrow the Christian's victory over it (Rom. 5: 3; 8: 35–39)."[2]

41. **Watch,** keep awake, be on your guard; let every faculty be on the alert. **And pray.** Let your hearts be open to heaven and its influences as well as to earth's. Use every possible means of help and defence in this your hour of need.

NOTE the double duty; watching and praying must go together. As Jay says, "Prayer without watching is hypocrisy; and watching without prayer is presumption."

Prayer is one of the means which enables us to keep awake and watchful. **That** (in order that) **ye enter not into temptation.** Assaults without cannot injure you, unless you enter into the spirit of temptation, and breathe its poisonous atmosphere. "The ship is safe in the ocean so long as the ocean is not in the ship." The enemy was close at hand. Spiritual dangers and temporal dangers, far beyond their conception, were secretly preparing to assail them. And nothing but watching and prayer could save them. Indeed, one result of their failure in both these was that they fell before the temptation. **The spirit,** the higher spiritual nature, with its will, conscience, affections. **Indeed is willing,** is ready, eager, desirous to do what is right. **But the flesh is weak,** the body, the physical nature, with all its natural tendencies and susceptibilities. Therefore all the more should they be on their guard.

43. **He came . . . again.** Even his warning did not prevent them from again falling asleep.

[1] Morison. Lyman Abbott.

45 Then cometh he to his disciples, and saith unto them, Sleep on now, and take your rest: behold, the [a] hour is at hand, and [b] the Son of man is betrayed into the hands of sinners.

46 Rise, let us be going: behold, he is at hand that doth betray me.

a John 12. 23, 27 & 13. 1 & 17. 1. Cp. ver. 18 & Luke 22. 53. *b* ch. 17. 22 & 20. 18.

44. He went away again and prayed the third time. Three times was this prayer made. Not that he merely repeated these words three times, but that he had three seasons of prayer of which these words were the soul, the essence.

THREE ANSWERS TO CHRIST'S PRAYER.

FIRST ANSWER: THE THING ASKED FOR. Christ's prayer was answered although the cup was not taken away, and answered in the same ways that God answers our prayers, as God answered Paul's prayer that the thorn in his flesh might be removed.[1] The angel strengthening him (Luke) was a direct answer. There are two ways of answering a prayer for the removal of a burden. In one, the burden is taken away, and we remain the same; in the other, we are made so strong that the burden is no longer a burden to us; as what would crush a child is but sport to a man. The latter is by far the best way of receiving an answer. Paul kept the thorn in his flesh, but God's grace was made sufficient for him. Jesus was comforted, *con* and *fortis*, "made strong together," inspired, filled with heart and hope and faith. Moreover, there was this answer, that God's will was done, as he asked. Both wills were blended in one.

SECOND ANSWER: CLOSER COMMUNION WITH GOD. He had most intimate communion with God. By his trouble and his prayer, he came close to his heavenly Father. This is one of the best answers to prayer, and is one of the reasons why prayer is commanded, and circumstances continually occur in our lives urging us to prayer.[2]

THIRD ANSWER: SOMETHING BETTER THAN ASKED FOR. The third answer to prayer is the giving, not that which we ask for in the form we ask it, but the soul of our prayer, the thing we in our deepest hearts want, and would ask for if we saw all things as God sees them. If clearly before the vision of Jesus there had appeared two choices, the one of escape from the cross, but with that also the failure of his mission, the triumph of evil, the loss of unnumbered souls, no crown, no glory, no abiding on the right hand of God; and the other choice, that of the cross and its agony, but with it also the redemption of the world, the ineffable glory of God, the joys of millions of the saved, the crown of triumph over evil, — who doubts which would have been his real, innermost prayer? His prayer was answered, for the cross was changed to a crown, Gethsemane into paradise, death into immortal glory.[3]

45. Then cometh he, for the third time. **Saith unto them, Sleep on now, and take your rest.** Not a sarcasm, not a reproof, but a kindly permission of love. Jesus had fought the battle and won. He had returned, and had simply to wait for further developments. He could now watch for himself, and what little time remained they might rest so as to be prepared for the weary hours soon to come.

After a period of rest, longer or shorter, Jesus from the hillside hears the sound of approaching footsteps, and sees in the distance the lanterns and the torches of Judas and his accomplices issuing from the city. Then Jesus arouses the sleepers, saying, **The hour is at hand,** the last act of the tragedy is about to begin. "Thus this heavenly eagle, though loving his young ones dearly, yet pricks and beats them out of the nest. The best, as bees, are killed with the honey of flattery, but quickened with the vinegar of reproof."[4]

46. Rise, let us be going, not to escape, but to confront the traitor and his band. How sublimely does the heroism of our Lord reveal itself! **He is at hand that doth betray me.** Jesus does not name Judas, but describes his character.

LESSONS FROM THE GARDEN OF GETHSEMANE. (1) To almost every one there come periods of great conflict with the powers of evil, great dread in the presence of sorrow. Like Bunyan's Christian we have sometimes to walk through the Valley of the Shadow of Death, fight with Apollyons, see the lurid flames of evil, hear the whisperings of demons, and walk cautiously the narrow path through them all, with the deep ditch of Presumption on one side, and the treacherous quagmire of Despair on the other.

(2) The way of deliverance is through prayer, sustained by the watching and prayer of friends.

[1] See Jacox's *Secular Annotations*, vol. i. p. 147, "Desired Boon: Realized Bane." Also tract, *Expectation Corner*.

[2] Trench's *Poems*, "The Suppliant," is an excellent illustration of this kind of answer to prayer.

[3] Goethe's poem, "Strive and Wait and Pray."

[4] John Trapp.

47 ¶ [c] And while he yet spake, lo, [d] Jū'das, one of the twelve, came, and with him a great multitude with swords and staves, from the chief priests and elders of the people.

48 Now he that betrayed him gave them a sign, saying, Whomsoever I shall kiss, that [same] is he: [hold take] him. [fast.]

49 And [forthwith straightway] he came to Jē'sus, and said, Hail, [e] [master; Rab'bi]; and [f] kissed him.

c For vers. 47–56, see Mark 14. 43–50 & Luke 22. 47–53 & John 18. 3–11. *d* ver. 14. Acts 1. 16. *e* ver. 25. *f* Luke 7. 38, 45 & 15. 20. Acts 20. 37 (Gk.).

(3) We learn what it is to pray in faith. It is not insisting on the one thing we desire, in the form we desire it. It is trusting in a loving Father, so that we can say, "Thy will, not mine, be done." "Prayer is not conquering God's reluctance, but taking hold of God's willingness."[1]

(4) We learn something of the ways in which God answers prayer. He answers "in kind or in kindness." He gives us the living soul of our desires, even in denying the form.

(5) God has many angels to send down to strengthen us, — angels, friends, forces of nature, the Holy Spirit, the sacred Word, providences.

(6) We realize the human sympathy and experience of Christ. He was tempted like as we are. He was no stoic. He did not steel himself against sorrow. He felt pain, and shame, and trouble, with a quivering human heart. "He was a man with a human history and development; he had to ascend a stair, so to speak, of obedience and perfection. . . . Every new step required a new effort, and when surmounted brought him to a higher stage of perfection." (Heb. 2 : 10.)[2]

(7) We see what true heroism is. It is not dulness as to feeling, not deadness to danger, not indifference to results. It is the most sensitive nature, and the most vivid consciousness of the appalling pain and danger, going right on in the path of duty. It is moral courage, infinitely more than physical courage.

(8) There is always danger to the soul in sleeping when it should be watching. The hour that brought victory to Jesus brought defeat to the disciples, who soon all forsook their Master and fled.[3]

(9) The best people find the least fault with their brethren, and are the most ready to find excuses for the failures of others.

Section XXIII. — THE TRIAL OF JESUS, 26 : 47–27 : 26.

I. THE BETRAYAL AND ARREST, vers. 47–56.

Time. About one o'clock Friday morning, April 7.

Place. In the valley of the Kidron, near Gethsemane.

Parallels. Mark 14 : 43–52; Luke 22 : 47–53; John 18 : 1–12.

47. **While he yet spake,** arousing his disciples. **Lo, Judas, one of the twelve, came.** He knew where he would be likely to find Jesus, because Jesus was accustomed to resort to this garden with his disciples (John). **And with him a great multitude,** including a band of Roman soldiers, Jewish officers, captains of the temple police, **chief priests and elders,** and their attendants, such as Malchus, followed by a multitude of people, **with swords and staves,** lanterns and torches and weapons.

48. **Gave them a sign,** or token, by which the soldiers would know whom to arrest. **Whomsoever I shall kiss.** It appears to have been the custom for disciples to give the kiss of salutation to their Master whenever they returned from absence. Here Judas does exactly what Peter would have done had he returned to report himself. It is probable that he kept somewhat aloof from the band that followed him, for if Peter had thought Judas was betraying Christ in kissing him it would not have been at Malchus' head his sword was aimed.[4] The depths of the traitor's depravity are shown by his using the sign of friendship as a token of treason. "He stole the livery of the court of heaven to serve the devil in."[5]

49. **Hail** (χαῖρε, *rejoice, be well, prosper*), **master; and kissed him,** κατεφίλησεν, *kissed much, kissed again and again; rained kisses* upon him.[6]

[1] Bp. Phillips Brooks.

[2] Prof. Stalker.

[3] See the poem on the "Hundred Gates of Thebes," by Mrs. Clara Doty Bates : —

"Then, O my soul, knowing the fate that waits
One careless hour, a faithful vigil keep!
Set sentinels at all thy hundred gates,
Nor let them faint nor sleep!"

[4] Richard Glover. [5] Pollock.

[6] Dante in his vision of hell places Judas in the lowest circles of the damned. Green's *Short History of the English People* (i. 147, 148) compares King John with Judas :

50 And Jē'sus said unto him, [g] Friend, [h] *do* wherefore art thou come? that for which thou art come. Then came they, they came and laid hands on Jē'sus, and took him.

51 And behold, one of them which that were with Jē'sus stretched out his his hand, and drew his [i] sword, and struck a smote the servant of the high priest's, priest, and smote struck off his ear.

52 Then said saith Jē'sus unto him, Put up again thy sword into his its place: for [j] all they that take the sword shall perish with the sword.

53 [k] Thinkest Or thinkest thou that I cannot now pray to beseech my Father, and he shall presently give even now send me [l] more than twelve [m] legions of angels?

54 [n] But how How then shall should the scriptures be fulfilled, that thus it must be?

g ch. 20. 13 & 22. 12. *h* Cp. John 13. 27. *i* Cp. Luke 22. 38. *j* Rev. 13. 10. Cp. Gen. 9. 6 & Ezek. 35. 6. *k* Cp. John 10. 18. *l* Cp. ch. 4. 11 & 2 Kin. 6. 17 & Dan. 7. 10 & Luke 22. 43 & John 18. 36. *m* Luke 8. 30. *n* See ver. 24 & ch. 1. 22.

50. **Jesus said unto him, Friend,** ἑταῖρε, *comrade, partner*, a respectful and kindly address, but very different from the φίλους, *friends, beloved*, which Jesus called his disciples in John 15:15, at the supper two or three hours before. Jesus first said to him, "Judas, betrayest thou the Son of man with a kiss?" (John); then followed, "Do that for which thou art come," the R. V. of **wherefore art thou come?** which should not be a question, but an imperative. Jesus then stood forth and said to the leaders and the Roman guard, "Whom seek ye?" making no effort to escape.[1] At this word they, including Judas, went backwards and fell to the ground. Again Jesus asked, "Whom seek ye?" which of us do you want? preparing them for his request that they should let his disciples go their way (John). **Then came they, and laid hands on Jesus, and took him**, and bound him (John).

51. **And, behold, one of them**, Peter, according to John's report, **drew his sword**, in his impetuous, loving, courageous way, beginning to show that he would live up to his promise that he would die for Jesus before he would desert him. He, single-handed, defied the whole Roman and Jewish power. **Struck a** (the) **servant.** The article signifies that he was a personal attendant **of the high priest's.** His name was Malchus, according to John, who being acquainted with the high priest would be able to recognize the man. Peter struck at his head, but in his excitement or inexperience, he missed and only **smote off his ear.**

52. **Put up again thy sword**, which Peter may still have been brandishing. Jesus gives three reasons.

First. It was suicidal. **All they that take the sword shall perish by the sword.** Force will destroy those religions and kingdoms which are founded on force, and only those founded on truth and principles of righteousness can endure. Thus Peter would, by his course, only ruin the kingdom he wanted to help, and dethrone the king he desired to reign. Peter's was a very rash act, for (1) it compromised Jesus in his teaching that his kingdom was not of this world, but a spiritual kingdom. (2) It would place him in the attitude of a rebel against the Roman government, and Pilate could not have pronounced him innocent, for it would give color to the charges of the Pharisees that Jesus was an enemy of Cæsar, and a rebel against the Roman government. (3) Peter might have been arrested for rebellion, and perhaps the other disciples with him, and their work of founding the kingdom have been greatly hindered.

Second. It was needless. 53. **My Father . . . shall presently**, even now, at once, **give me more than twelve legions of angels**, twelve great companies of angels, like the Roman legions of 3000 soldiers each. No power could resist such a guard.[2] Twelve men with two swords among them could do nothing.

Third. It was in opposition to God's plan. 54. **But how then shall the scriptures**, such as

"Foul as it is, hell itself is defiled by the fouler presence of (King) John. Judas can no longer be lonely." The end of Judas was a tragic failure. He lost everything and gained nothing.

Compare Poe's *Raven*, with its sad refrain of "Nevermore." See Matthew Arnold's *Poems*, "St. Brendan," where this saint finds Judas on an iceberg.

Robert Buchanan has a poem which represents the soul of Judas burdened ever with his dead body, which the earth rejected in horror. His soul could not get rid of this "body of death."

Bruce's *Training of the Twelve* gives several historic parallels.

Rev. Francis E. Clark, D. D., in the *Monday Club Sermons*, "Judas," describes a weird picture of Judas in the Royal Gallery of Brussels.

[1] Compare Scott's *Marmion*, when he cowered before the sudden appearance of one he had wronged, "Thus oft it haps," etc. Joseph Cook's *Monday Lectures, Conscience*, "The Solar Look."

[2] See 2 Kings 6:17, the unseen horses and chariots of fire defending Elisha.

Compare Whittier's *Poems*, "The Angel of St. Mark."

55 In that same hour said Jē'sus to the multitudes, Are ye come out as against a thief, robber with swords and staves for to take, to seize me? *o* I sat daily with you teaching in the temple, *p* teaching, and ye laid no hold on me, took me not.

56 But *u* all this was done, is come to pass, that the scriptures of the prophets might be fulfilled. *q* Then all the disciples forsook, left him, and fled.

57 ¶ *r* And *s* they that had laid hold on, taken Jē'sus led him away to *the house of* Cā'ja-phăs the high priest, where the scribes and the elders were assembled, gathered together.

58 But *u* Pē'tēr followed him afar off, unto the *t* high priest's palace, court of the high priest, and went, entered in, and sat with the *v* servants, officers, to see the end.

o [John 8. 2]. Cp. Luke 2. 46 & John 18. 20. *p* ch. 21. 23. Cp. ch. 4. 23. *q* ver. 31. Cp. Ps. 88. 8, 18 & John 16. 32. *r* Luke 22. 54. *s* For vers. 57–68, see Mark 14. 53–65. Cp. John 18. 12, 13, 19–24. *t* ver. 3. *u* Cp. John 18. 15. *v* John 7. 32 & 18. 3. Acts 5. 22, 26, *al.*

Isa. 53; Ps. 22; Zech. 13: 7, **be fulfilled**, if I ask and receive such defence. Therefore I will not ask it. **That thus it must be.** It is necessary that I should suffer and be crucified, in order to redeem the world and bring in the kingdom of God. The prophecy was spoken because that which was prophesied was essential. "The cup that my Father hath given me, shall I not drink it?" (John).

Remedying the Evil. From the other evangelists we learn that Jesus did all he could to repair the injury done by Peter's rash act; he healed the wounded man. "In Luke the scene is very beautiful, the Lord saying, 'Suffer ye thus far,'—*i. e.*, probably, 'Permit me thus far the use of my hands,'—and touching the ear with healing power."[1]

(1) This healing showed that Jesus was no rebel against the Roman power.

(2) It showed the nature of his kingdom, as the kingdom of peace and truth and love.

(3) It showed his own character and how he lived up to his own precepts.

It is recorded only by the physician, Luke, (22: 51). "Thus the last act of those hands before they were bound was a work of mercy and of peace in healing that slight wound, the only one ever inflicted for his sake."[2]

55. **Jesus said to the multitudes**, to show them how mistaken they were as to his mission. **As against a thief**, rather, "a robber," the leader of an armed band. **I sat**, the imperfect tense denotes something habitual, "was accustomed to sit." Why are you such cowards as to do in darkness and force what you dared not do in the light?

56. **But all this was done.** Jesus is still speaking to the multitudes, to point out to them what their own scriptures said about the Messiah. **Then all the disciples forsook him, and fled.** They were forbidden to defend him; so far as they could see they could only quietly yield themselves up with him, or escape in the darkness. They were encouraged to do this by Jesus' request to the officers to let them go (John 18 : 8). And yet it was a disappointment. Peter and John returned in a short time, and followed Jesus to the place of trial.

II. THE TRIAL BEFORE THE JEWISH AUTHORITIES,[3] vers. 57–75.

Time. From about half past one to five o'clock Friday morning, April 7.

Place. The palace of the high priest, and the Gazith, the hall of the Sanhedrim.

Parallels. Mark 14 : 53–65; Luke 22: 54–65; John 18 : 13–27.

First. Jesus was taken first to Annas (John), an old man of 70 years, formerly high priest, a man of great influence, ambitious and arrogant, and virtually at the head of ecclesiastical affairs, though his son-in-law Caiaphas was the nominal high priest. (See John 18 : 12–24.)

Second. 57. **They that had laid hold on Jesus led him away to Caiaphas**, probably in the same building as Annas, and connected with the same inner court. Here were gathered together **the scribes and the elders**, and the chief priests (Mark).

58. **But Peter followed him afar off**, with John (John 18 : 15), keeping away from the excited crowd. They showed their desire to keep their promise to Jesus. But it is always dangerous to follow afar off. Many a Christian has fallen before temptation because he followed his Master

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[1] W. N. Clarke, D. D.

[2] Prof. A. Tholuck.

[3] Stalker's *Trial and Death of Jesus Christ* is one of the most helpful books. *The Trial of Jesus Christ*, a legal monograph by a lawyer, A. Taylor Innes, is very thoughtful and enlightening. Professor Greenleaf's *Testimony of the Evangelists* gives three accounts of the trial of Jesus: one by Salvador, from the Jewish point of view; one by M. Dupin, a French lawyer; and one by Professor Greenleaf, of the Law School of Harvard University.

Lew Wallace's *Ben Hur* is a real aid in understanding these times.

59 Now the chief priests' and elders, and all the the whole [w] council' [x] sought false witness
against Jē'ṣus, to that they might put him to death;
60 But found none: yea, and they found it not, [y] though many false witnesses came; yet found they none. At the last But afterward
came [z] two, false witnesses,
61 And and said, This fellow man said, [a] I am able to [b] destroy the temple of God, and to
build it in three days.
62 And the high priest arose, stood up, and said unto him, Answerest thou nothing?
what is it which is it which these witness against thee?
63 [c] But Jē'ṣus held his peace. [d] And the high priest answered and said unto him,
[e] I adjure thee by the [f] living God, that thou [g] tell us whether thou be the
[h] Chrīst, the [i] Son of God.

w ch. 5. 22 & 10. 17, *al.* *x* See Acts 6. 11. *y* Ps. 27. 12 & 35. 11. *z* Deut. 19. 15. *a* Cp. Acts 6. 14. See John 2. 19. *b* ch. 27. 40. *c* ch. 27. 12, 14. Isai. 53. 7. John 19. 9. *d* For vers. 63–66, cp. Luke 22. 67–71. *e* Cp. Lev. 5. 1 & 1 Sam. 14. 24, 26 & Mark 5. 7. *f* See ch. 16. 16. *g* John 10. 24. *h* Cp. ch. 22. 42–45. See ch. 1. 17. *i* See ch. 14. 33.

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afar off in spirit and in life. **Unto the high priest's palace, and went in,** by the aid of John, who was acquainted there (John). **And sat with the servants,** who were warming themselves around a fire of coals.

59. **And all the council,** at an irregular meeting, for it was illegal because held before sunrise. "It was a packed jury, a star chamber of self-appointed assessors." The object of the enemies of Jesus was to condemn him and to give him over to the Roman authorities for crucifixion before his friends could rally and interpose in his behalf. **Sought false witness against Jesus,** for it was impossible to condemn him by any true accusations. **To put him to death.** This they had determined for reasons of their own. What they wanted now was some plausible pretext.

A Possible Array of Witnesses. What an array of witnesses they might have found had they wished to learn the truth! Here a company of those who had been lame, but now were running to tell the story of their healing; there a band of those who had been blind, but now could see; lepers who had been cleansed; demoniacs clothed and in their right mind; sick raised from their beds, and dead brought to life again; sad hearts comforted; sinful souls redeemed; ignorant minds enlightened; wandering ones restored. It is still the same; many men refuse to look at the true witnesses for the gospel which are many and strong.

60. **But found none,** nothing available, nothing which would prove any charge. **At the last came two false witnesses.** "There must be two witnesses (Deut. 19 : 15), and probably no two witnesses could be found, out of the ranks of the disciples, who had ever heard out of his own lips an avowal of his Messiahship."[1] The testimony was false (1) because the facts were not correctly reported, and (2) because they were entirely misapplied and perverted. This is a very common way of bearing false witness against our neighbor. "The perjury was all the more perjured because it bore some distant resemblance to truth."

61. **This fellow said,** and they declare they had heard him say it (Mark). **I am able to destroy the temple of God.** "The utterance of words tending to bring the Temple into contempt was regarded as so grave an offence that it afterward formed a capital charge against the first martyr, Stephen (Acts 6 : 13)."[2] The Jews idolized the Temple. Note that his accusers were obliged to go back three years, to the very opening of his ministry, to find what they might even *call* testimony (John 2 : 19). This was either misunderstood, dimly remembered, or wilfully perverted.

"Note in reference to this charge (1) that Christ had not said so; he had said (John 2 : 19) that the Jews would destroy the temple, which he would restore; (2) that they understood, at least partially, that he had referred to his own body (Matt. 27 : 40, 63)."[3] (3) The promise to restore the temple proved that he had no hostility to it, and his cleansing it had shown how much he cared for it.

62. **Answerest thou nothing?** Jesus had treated the testimony with silent contempt. It was not worth replying to, and no explanations would have done any good. **What is it,** why do you not explain?

63. **But Jesus held his peace.** See Isa. 53 : 7 and 1 Pet. 2 : 23. They would not accept a denial, and they would have perverted the meaning of any explanation he could make. He refused to "cast pearls before swine" or to "give that

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[1] Andrews, *Life of Christ.* [2] Maclear. [3] Lyman Abbott.

64 Jē′sus saith unto him, [j]Thou hast said: nevertheless I say unto you, [k] Hereafter shall ye / Henceforth ye shall see the Son of man [l]sitting [on / at] the right hand of power, and [k]coming [in / on] the clouds of heaven.

65 Then the high priest [m]rent his [clothes, / garments,] saying, [n]He hath spoken blasphemy; what further need have we of witnesses? behold, now ye have heard [his / the] blasphemy:

66 [What / what] think ye? They answered and said, [o]He is [guilty / worthy] of death.

67 Then did they [p]spit in his face, and [buffeted / buffet] him; [q]and [others / some] [r]smote [him / him] with the palms of their hands,

j ver. 25. *k* See ch. 16. 27 & 24. 30. *l* Ps. 110. 1. Heb. 1. 3. Cp. Mark 16. 19. *m* Num. 14. 6. Acts 14. 14. *n* ch. 9. 3. John 10. 36. *o* See Lev. 24. 16. *p* ch. 27. 30. Isai. 50. 6. Mark 10. 34. *q* Cp. Luke 22. 63–65 & John 18. 22. *r* ch. 5. 39. Acts 23. 2.

which was holy to dogs." There are many times when it is well for Christians to imitate their Master in this. Do not waste time and strength in replying to blatant infidels who are determined to oppose Christianity under all circumstances. Replying often advertises the enemy; and arguments take the attention from the main work of the Gospel, the saving of the world from sin. Attend to the business of the Church, save men from sin, culture them into a noble character, help the needy, visit the sick, preach the Gospel, and the works of Christianity will answer its enemies. "If you had a bent tube, one arm of which was the size of a pipe-stem, and the other big enough to hold the ocean, water would stand at the same height in one as in the other. Controversy equalizes fools and wise men in the same way — *and the fools know it.*" [1]

I adjure thee by the living God, I put you under oath. The high priest's only hope was to get Jesus to say something from which they could make an accusation. **Tell us whether thou be the Christ, the Messiah, the Son of God.** "The difficulty of this question consisted in this: if he *confessed* that he was the Son of God, they stood ready to condemn him for blasphemy; if he *denied* it, they were prepared to condemn him for being an impostor, and for deluding the people under pretence of being the Messiah." [2]

64. **Jesus saith unto him, Thou hast said,** equivalent to "I am." Silence is now impossible. It would be taken as a denial of his Messiahship. "The high priest has given him the opportunity of proclaiming his Gospel in presence of the council, and he will not lose it, though it seal his condemnation. 'He cannot deny himself.'" [3] Now, if they kill him, they must kill their Messiah. **Nevertheless,** in spite of your unbelief, your scornful incredulity, **I say unto you, Hereafter,** ἀπ' ἄρτι, *from now, forward from now, some time after now.* "Christ's glorification began as soon as their proceedings against him were finished, and in such a way as to make the Jewish people see his power." [4] **Shall ye see the Son of man sitting on the right hand of power,** of God who possesses all power. You seem to be in authority now, but soon all will be changed. I am to rule, and you will be in my power. **Coming in the clouds of heaven.** See on 24 : 30.

65. **The high priest rent his clothes,** in token of intense indignation and grief, which he wished to express before others. **He hath spoken blasphemy,** evil speaking, slander, against God. It was really treason against God and the kingdom of heaven, and like treason in every country was punishable by death (Lev. 24 : 16). See on 12 : 31.

66. **He is guilty of death,** of a crime that demands death as its fitting punishment. This was their sentence. But having formulated the charge, they must adjourn till a regular meeting could be held in their hall after sunrise, for the sentence to be passed according to their legal forms.

The Charge of the Sanhedrim was Blasphemy.

The Sentence was Death.

The Mockery. *In the court of Caiaphas' palace. After the adjournment of the irregular trial. From three to five o'clock Friday morning* (Matt. 26 : 67, 68; Mark 14 : 65; Luke 22 : 63–65). When the preliminary examination was through, and the informal meeting had adjourned, there was a period of waiting for at least two hours before the formal meeting of the Sanhedrim could take place. During this interval Jesus was insulted and shamefully treated by the crowd.

67. **Then did they spit in his face,** the meanest of insults. The act practically said, You are the offscouring, the refuse of the earth, fit only for the basest of uses. Then follow five forms of beating. **Buffeted him,** ἐκολάφισαν, *struck him*

[1] Oliver Wendell Holmes. [2] Albert Barnes. [3] Monro Gibson. [4] Prof. Philip Schaff.

68 Saying, saying, Prophesy unto us, thou *s* Chrīst: Who who is he that smote struck thee?
69 *t* Now Pē′tēr was sat sitting without *u* in the palace court: and a damsel maid came unto him, saying, Thou also wast with Jē′sus of Gal′i-lee the Gal-i-la′an.
70 But he denied before *them* them all, saying, I know not what thou sayest.
71 And when he was gone out into the porch, another *maid* saw him, and said saith unto them that were there, This fellow was also man also was with Jē′sus *v* of Naz′a-reth the Naz-a-rene′.
72 And again he denied with an oath, I do not know know not the man.
73 And after a little while came unto *him* came they that stood by, and said to Pē′tēr, Surely of a truth thou also art *one* of them; for thy *w* speech bewrayeth thee.

s ver. 63. *t* For vers. 69–75, see Mark 14. 66–72 & Luke 22. 55–62 & John 18. 16–18, 25–27. *u* ver. 3. *v* ch. 2. 23. *w* Cp. Judg. 12. 6.

with the fist; **smote him with the palms of their hands**, expressed in one word, ἐῤῥάπισαν (from ῥαπίς, a *rod*), *smote him with rods, smote him in the face with the palm of the hand, boxed his ears;* δέροντες, *to flay, to skin* (low English, *to hide*), *to beat, to thrash* (Luke); παίσας, *to smite* with fists or swords (ver. 68), ῥαπίσμασιν ἔλαβον, *they caught at him, reached after him, with blows of the fist or of rods* (Mark).

68. **Saying**, after they had blindfolded him (Luke), **Prophesy unto us, thou Christ.** Prove that you are a prophet by telling **who is he that smote thee**; thus ridiculing his claims.

The Denials of Peter. Time. The first denial was during the trial before the chief priests, the others described most fully by John in the latter part of the trial, or during the interval between the trial and dawn, while the mockeries were going on. Place of all was the inner court of the palace.

To understand the scenes here depicted it is needful to have before us a distinct picture of an ancient palace such as the high priests occupied, "for it was unlike most of our houses. A Western house looks into the street, but an Oriental into its own interior, having no opening to the front except a great arched gateway, shut with a heavy door or gate. When this door is opened, it discloses a broad passage penetrating the front of the building and leading into a square, paved courtyard, open to the sky, around which the house is built, and into which its rooms, both upstairs and downstairs, look." "On the side of the passage, inside the outer gate, there is a room or lodge for the porter or portress, who opens and shuts the gate; and in the gate there is a little wicket by which individuals can be let in or out." The band with Jesus entered by the large gate, Peter coming later, by the wicket gate.[1] At Pompeii, within a few years, there has been a restoration as far as possible of much that was taken away, and especially has there been uncovered and restored the Palace of the Vettii with its gardens and courts. As these were built within half a century of Christ's time, they give us a good idea of what Caiaphas' palace may have been.

First Denial.

69. **Now Peter sat without** the judgment hall **in the palace** of Caiaphas, in the central open court. He was sitting with the servants and others around a fire, on account of the cold (Luke). **And a damsel**, one of the maids of the high priest (Mark); the doorkeeper who had admitted him (John). **Thou also wast with Jesus of Galilee.** Probably the statement was made in both cases in malicious banter or light ridicule, as the charge evidently led to no further consequences.[2]

70. **But he denied before them all**, who were gathered around the fire. **I know not what thou sayest.** I do not even understand what you mean; I have nothing to do with the affair. This was within sight of Jesus in the hall opening into the court.

71. **And when he was gone out into the porch**, the outer entrance to the court. He had retreated there, either to avoid observation, away from the light of the fire, or to be ready to escape, if necessary. **Another maid saw him, and said unto them that were there.** Luke says, "another" (masculine), and John, "they." Probably several spoke, some to him, and some to their companions. **This fellow was also with Jesus of Nazareth.** Some of them very probably saw him in the garden, when the arrest was made; and others had seen him with Jesus in his labors.

Second Denial.

72. **And again he denied with an oath.** His first lie is "whirling him into a vortex of meanness and sin." **I do not know the man.** Another rapidly downward step into a more positive lie and unblushing perjury. Peter, having begun to go wrong, is like a man in a quicksand, sinking deeper with every effort to advance.

"O thou child of many prayers,
Life hath quicksands, life hath snares."

73. **And after a while**, about an hour after

[1] Prof. Stalker.

[2] Lange.

74 Then began he to curse and to swear, *saying,* I know not the man. And immediately straightway the cock crew.

75 And Pē'tĕr remembered the word of Je'sus, which said unto him, which Je'sus had said, *x* Before the cock crow, thou shalt *y* deny me thrice. And he went out, and wept bitterly.

x ver. 34. *y* Cp. Acts 3. 13, 14.

(Luke 22 : 59). **They that stood by.** The main charge was prominently made by *one*, — a kinsman of Malchus, who had seen Peter in the garden and was known to St. John from his acquaintance with the high priest's household (John 18 : 26). **For thy speech bewrayeth thee,** "betrayeth," shows that thou art a Galilean (Mark), and therefore one of his disciples, or why else art thou here? The Galileans were unable to pronounce the gutturals distinctly, and they lisped, pronouncing *sh* like *th*.[1] "Happy he whose speech bewrays him to be a disciple of Christ!"[2]

Third Denial.

74. **Then began he to curse,** καταθεματίζειν, allied to *anathema*, *to call down anathemas* or *curses on himself*, if what he said was not true. A new development of his profanity. He now lost all self-control. **And to swear,** to call God to witness that it was true. It is more than probable that Peter, in his earlier life as a fisherman, before his conversion, had been in the habit of using profane language, and now, in the sudden surprise of temptation, the old habit broke forth anew, as the language of youth, long unused, is almost certain to be employed in times of great excitement. It is a long and hard discipline that entirely conquers the sins of our youth. **I know not the man.** "The ways down which the bad ship Wickedness slides to a shoreless ocean must be greased with lies." "A lie is put out to interest, and the interest is compound."

Peter's Repentance. **And immediately the cock crew,** while he was denying Jesus with cursing. In the days when no clocks marked the time, "cock-crowing" had become a familiar phrase, as with us, for the earliest hour of dawn. When the cock-crowing is spoken of alone, this is the hour meant. Mark mentions two cock-crowings, the first being earlier. In Matthew only the main one is mentioned.

75. **And Peter remembered the word of Jesus,** verse 34. This awakened Peter to a sense of what he was doing. It made him think thereon (Mark 14 : 72). Another thing made him remember: "just then, according to Luke (22 : 61), our Lord 'turned and looked on Peter'[3] with a glance of sadness and pity, that went like lightning to the quick of his conscience."[4] **And he went out, and wept bitterly.** "Flinging the fold of his mantle over his head, he too, like Judas, rushed forth into the night, but not as Judas; into the unsunned darkness of miserable self-condemnation, but not into the midnight of remorse and despair; into the night, but, as has been beautifully said, it was 'to meet the morning dawn.' If the angel of Innocence had left him, his 'younger brother,' the angel of Repentance, took him gently by the hand."[5]

LESSONS FROM PETER'S EXPERIENCE.

(1) Peter's fall is recorded, because the Gospel scorns to deny the actual defects of good men, because the truth is helpful to others who fail, showing the possibility of recovery, and the only way to recovery.

(2) We do not judge Peter aright unless we take into the account not only his sin, but also his repentance, and the change wrought into his character. It is easy to see faults and forget virtues, to look at the thorn and forget the rose, to imitate the faults of great men, while we neglect their virtues. "The character of the very Devil might be made up from a mosaic of the bad side of good men;"[6] as we could form a Thersites, a human monster, of the physical defects, the warts, moles, wrinkles, and pimples of beautiful women or noble-looking men.

(3) Peter's self-sufficiency was one step toward his fall. He was sure that he would never fail, and made the strongest assertions of his steadfastness. But "pride goeth before destruction, and a haughty spirit before a fall." Peter failed in his strongest point. Courage, outspoken boldness, devotion to his Master, were his pride and boast. Here there seemed little danger of failure; and yet just here he did fail. Where we feel strong we are liable to be unguarded, and we fail there for that very reason.

(4) Peter's courage was great; but as yet it was too much outward and physical, and too little the courage of faith, of principle, of duty. Contrast Peter and John. "John went straight through the court where those taunting maids and gibing soldiers were, and no one put a question to him. Pretty soon after that we see him

[1] *Cambridge Bible.* [2] Matthew Henry.
[3] Mrs. Browning's *Poems*, the three sonnets, "The Two Sayings," "The Look," "The Meaning of the Look." Also Ambrose's *Hymn at the Cock-Crowing.*
[4] Prof. Schaff.
[5] Canon Farrar.
[6] H. C. Trumbull, LL. D.

issuing orders to the servants," while Peter, in his desire to slink out of sight as a Christian, is hounded and taunted.

(5) Peter entered into temptation, led on by mingled motives, courage, self-sufficiency, weakness, and unbelief. Had he gone into the court as an open follower of Jesus, he would have been safe from falling, but he took a place among the enemies of Jesus as one of them. The only safe way is to keep out of temptation, or to be so full of faith and courage when forced into it that it cannot harm you; as, according to the legend, the fires of hell could not burn the saint cast into them, because his soul was full of heaven. Had Peter been bound with Christ he "would probably have stood faithful; but the devil who was sifting him had a much finer sieve than that to run him through. He brought him to no formal trial, where he could gird himself for a special effort, but to an unobserved, casual questioning by a slave girl. The whole trial was over before he knew he was being tried. So do most of our real trials come."[1] "One of Solon's laws was that, in case of insurrection in the city, he who does not attach himself to either party, or act on either side, shall be branded with civic infamy. Solon's theory was that neutrality in a disturbed condition of the state indicated either indifference to the public well-being, or the most sordid selfishness."[2]

(6) It is a touching and beautiful tradition, true to the sincerity of Peter's repentance, if not a historical reality, that, all his life long, the remembrance of this night never left him, and that, morning by morning, he rose at the hour when the look of his Master had entered his soul, to pray once more for pardon.[3]

(7) Concerning Peter's repentance and restoration, note (1) its intensity and thoroughness. It was deep and complete. (2) Contrast it with the false repentance of Judas. Judas was sorry rather for the consequences of his sin than for the guilt of it. And instead of living to remedy all the possible results of his crime, he hanged himself. Still of himself he was thinking, not of the cause. (3) To the repentant Peter restoration was possible; and after a season of bitterest sorrow it was granted fully and freely (John 21:15–17). "If I could paint a portrait of Peter," says Luther, "I would write on every hair of his head *forgiveness of sins*." A diamond may fall into the mire, but it is a diamond still; but an apple rotten to the core is rotten whether in the mire or in a dish of gold. (4) Peter was permanently changed for the better by his experience, and he uses this experience in urging others to escape the snare into which he had fallen (1 Pet. 3:15; 5:6–10). (5) The genuineness of his repentance and restoration was proved by a long life of devoted service to his Master; as, for instance, Acts 4:8, 12, 19. It was now that Peter was "sifted as wheat." Part of what he thought was wheat was really chaff, and this terrible sifting under temptation blew away in the roughest manner most of the chaff, — his inconstancy, his fiery temper, his self-confidence.

"Heir of the self-same heritage,
Child of the self-same God,
They have but stumbled in the path
We have in weakness trod."

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[1] Prof. Marcus Dods. [2] Dr. Peabody's *Plutarch on the Delay of Divine Justice*, p. 10. [3] Geikie, *Life of Christ*.

CHAPTER 27.

The Roman Trial and the Crucifixion.

SECTION XXIII. — THE TRIAL OF JESUS (*continued*), vers. 1–10.

2. THE TRIAL BEFORE THE JEWISH AUTHORITIES (completed).
   The Legalized Sentence by the Sanhedrim, vers. 1, 2.
   The End of Judas, vers. 3–10.
3. THE TRIAL BEFORE PILATE, vers. 11–30.

First Trial before Pilate.	Six Expedients of Pilate.
The Trial before Herod.	The Verdict of Innocence.
The Second Trial before Pilate.	Delivered to be crucified.

SECTION XXIV. — THE CRUCIFIXION, vers. 31–66.

1. On the Way to the Cross.	4. The Death of Jesus the Christ.
2. The Crucifixion.	5. Accompanying Signs.
3. Scenes around the Cross.	6. The Burial.

1 [z] (When the / Now when) morning was come, all the chief priests and (the) elders of the people [a] took counsel against Jē'sus to put him to death:

2 (And when / and) they (had) bound him, (they / and) [b] led (him / him) away, and [c] delivered him (up) to (Pon'ti-us) [d] Pī'late the governor.

3 ¶ Then [e] Jū'das, which (had) betrayed him, when he saw that he was condemned, [f] repented himself, and brought (again / back) [g] the thirty pieces of silver to the chief priests and elders,

z Mark 15. 1. Luke 22. 66. *a* See ch. 26. 4. *b* Luke 23. 1. John 18. 28. *c* See ch. 20. 19. *d* Luke 3. 1 & 13. 1. Acts 3. 13 & 4. 27. 1 Tim. 6. 13. *e* See ch. 26. 14. *f* ch. 21. 29. *g* ch. 26. 15.

II. THE JEWISH TRIAL COMPLETED, vers. 1–10.

TIME. At sunrise Friday morning, April 7.

PLACE. The Sanhedrim hall.

PARALLELS. Mark 15 : 1. With the end of Judas (vers. 3–10), Acts 1 : 16–20.

THE SANHEDRIM PASS A LEGALIZED SENTENCE AGAINST JESUS, vers. 1, 2.

1. **When the morning was come.** From the time of the adjournment of the irregular meeting of the Sanhedrim, probably not far from three o'clock in the morning, Jesus was exposed to the rude insults of the servants and the guard in the court of the high priest's palace, till toward sunrise. In the mean time the members of the Sanhedrim had been summoned, and **all the chief priests and elders of the people** had gathered together either in the palace or in the Sanhedrim hall adjoining the Temple. These **took counsel**, "held a consultation" (Mark). The purpose of this meeting was the formal ratification of the result reached in the meeting of the council described in our last lesson, which could not give a legal sentence before sunrise. **To put him to death.** At this time the Jews were not permitted to put any one to death. They had to plan therefore some means by which they could influence Pilate to condemn Jesus to death. It was a difficult matter. We can see something of their planning at this meeting as we follow the story of the trial. The first thing was to have Jesus tried before Pilate. Then they attempted to persuade Pilate to condemn Jesus on their word that he deserved death. This failing, they dropped the religious charge, and formulated a charge of treason with three counts.

2. **And when they had bound him.** His bonds seem to have been wholly or partially removed during the Jewish trial and the mockeries in the palace. Now he is bound again, perhaps, according to an old tradition, with a cord around his neck. **Delivered him to Pontius Pilate,** probably at Castle Antonia adjoining the Temple. Here we leave him while we consider the case of Judas.

THE END OF JUDAS, vers. 3–10.

3. **Then Judas . . . when he saw that he** (Jesus) **was condemned,** perhaps witnessing the procession in which Jesus was being taken bound to the Roman authorities, **repented himself,** μεταμεληθείς, *to care for a thing afterwards.* He felt remorse and regret for what he had done. It is a different word from μετανοέω, the usual word for repentance when it expresses a change of heart,

4 Saying, saying, I have sinned in that I [have] betrayed [the] [h] innocent blood. And they said, What [is that] is that to us? [i] see thou *to* [that.] it.

5 And he cast down the pieces of silver [in] into [j] the temple, sanctuary, and departed; and he [k] went away and hanged himself.

6 And the chief priests took the silver pieces, pieces of silver, and said, It is not lawful [for] to put them into [l] the treasury, because since it is the price of blood.

7 And they took counsel, and bought with them the potter's field, to bury strangers in.

8 Wherefore [m] that field was called, The field of blood, [n] unto this day.

9 [o] Then was fulfilled that which was spoken by Jer'e-my Jer-e-mi'ah the prophet, saying, [p] And they took the thirty pieces of silver, the price of him that was valued, priced, whom they *certain* of the children of Ĭs'ra-el did value; price;

h ch. 23. 35 (for mg.). *i* ver. 24. *j* See Luke 1. 9 (mg.). *k* Cp. 2 Sam. 17. 23 & Acts 1. 18. *l* Mark 12. 41. 43. Luke 21. 1. John 8. 20. *m* Acts 1. 19. *n* ch. 28. 15. Cp. Gen. 26. 33, *al.* *o* See ch. 1. 22. *p* Cited from Zech. 11. 13.

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of choice, and of life. The first word also sometimes has this meaning, because regret and sorrow for the consequences of an act often lead to true repentance.

The conscience of Judas was awakened, as he saw the consequences of his deed. Very probably he had excused himself because he thought that Jesus could easily escape by his divine power. The consequences revealed to himself in terrific vision his utter baseness, the bottomless depth of his iniquity, as if he had seen the picture of Sin, as Milton describes the horrid monster. **Brought again the thirty pieces of silver**, shekels, which he had received from the chief priests and elders, two or three days before.

4. **I have betrayed the innocent blood.** This testimony is valuable, because it shows that one who would be exceedingly glad to find an excuse for his conduct in some fault or secret teaching of Jesus was obliged to confess that he was innocent. **They said, What is that to us? see thou to that.** We are not to blame for your sins, they are your affair, not ours. They had obtained what they wanted from him, and now cast him aside as vile refuse.

5. **He cast down the pieces of silver in the temple**, better, as R. V., "into the sanctuary," *εἰς τὸν ναὸν*, the inner sanctuary where the priests only could go. He flung the pieces over the separating wall. **And went and hanged himself.** In Acts (1 : 19) it is said that "falling headlong, he burst asunder in the midst." There is no contradiction between the two accounts. There were precipitous rocks on the sides of the temple platform, and elsewhere in the vicinity. Judas apparently went out to some of these places, and, taking his girdle, hanged himself to some overhanging tree, and the girdle becoming loose or the branch breaking with his weight, he fell to the bottom of the precipice. Prof. Hackett thinks it was from one of the olive trees near the top of the precipice overhanging the valley of Hinnom on the south and west of Jerusalem, in a portion of which burned the perpetual fires of Gehenna (land of Hinnom). "Olive trees still grow near the top of these rocks."

6. **The chief priests took the silver pieces**, probably after the crucifixion, when they would indeed be the price of blood. **It is not lawful.** This was inferred from Deut. 23 : 18. "In such cases the Jewish law provided that the money was to be restored to the donor; and if he insisted on giving it, that he should be induced to spend it for something for the public weal. This explains the apparent discrepancy between Matthew's account and that in the book of Acts (1 : 18). By a fiction of the law the money was still considered to be Judas', and to have been applied by him to the purchase of the potter's field." [1]

7. **Bought with them the potter's field.** "A place from which clay had been excavated for some well-known pottery, and purchased for so small a price because of its now useless character." [2] It was something like a worn-out brickyard. **To bury strangers in**, for foreigners, and for the poor and unknown.

8. **Called, The field of blood.** "Aceldama." Tradition places it in the valley of Hinnom, south of Jerusalem.

9. **Fulfilled that which was spoken by, through, Jeremy** (Greek for Jeremiah) **the prophet.** The quotation that follows is not found in Jeremiah, but is evidently derived from Zech. 11 : 13. There are several possible explanations. An error of some early copyist may have crept in,

[1] Prof. M. R. Vincent, *Word Studies.*

[2] Lyman Abbott.

10 And and they gave them for the potter's field, as the Lord appointed me.
11 [q] And Now Jē'sus stood before the governor: and the governor asked him, saying, Art thou the [r] King of the Jews? And Jē'sus said unto him, [s] Thou sayest.

q For vers. 11–14, see Mark 15. 2–5 & Luke 23. 2, 3 & John 18. 29–38. r vers. 29, 37. ch. 2. 2. John 18. 39 & 19. 3. Cp. ver. 42. s Cp. 1 Tim. 6. 13. See Luke 22. 70.

just as "strain at a gnat," in 23 : 24, is an early misprint for "strain out a gnat," perpetuated in our common version of the Bible. Or Jeremiah may have been bound together with Zechariah and others, and given the name to the collection, just as it frequently occurs in our day that the first story or article in a collection gives the title to the whole book. Thirty pieces of silver, the price of him that was valued. An event took place in the prophet's time, which in many points was strikingly repeated and illustrated by the case of Judas. "The prophet in vision is a representative of Jehovah acting as shepherd of Israel. The flock so misbehave that the shepherd calls for his wages to quit. The people (flock) show him contempt by valuing him at thirty shekels, the price of a slave. Jehovah says to the shepherd, 'Fling it to the potter, the glorious price at which I was priced by them.' The prophet adds, 'And I took the thirty pieces of silver, and I flung it in the house of Jehovah, to the potter.' In like manner Jesus is contemptuously valued by the representatives of Israel at thirty shekels, and this is flung away in the house of Jehovah, and goes to a potter for the purchase of his field." [1]

Why was such a Man chosen to be One of the Twelve? (1) There was needed among the disciples, as in the church now, a man of just such talents as Judas possessed, — the talent for managing business affairs. (2) Though he probably followed Christ at first from mixed motives, as did the other disciples, he had the opportunity of becoming a good and useful man. (3) It doubtless was included in God's plans that there should be thus a standing argument for the truth and honesty of the Gospel; for, if any wrong or trickery had been concealed, it would have been revealed by the traitor in self-defence. (4) It is a relief to modern churches to know that God can bless them, and the Gospel can succeed, even though some bad men may creep into the fold.

Judas' Motives in betraying Christ. (1) Anger at the public rebuke given him by Christ at the supper in the house of Simon the leper (Matt. 26: 6–14). (2) Avarice, covetousness, the thirty pieces of silver (John 12: 6). (3) A much larger covetousness, — an ambition to be the treasurer, not merely of a few poor disciples, but of a great and splendid temporal kingdom of the Messiah. He would hasten on the coming of that kingdom by compelling Jesus to defend himself. He began to fear that unless he did something desperate there was to be no kingdom after all. (4) Perhaps, also, Judas "abandoned what seemed to him a failing cause, and hoped by his treachery to gain a position of honor and influence in the Pharisaic party." (5) Anger and spite at the goodness which continually condemned him awakened his conscience, and called him to a life he was determined not to live.

The Judas Failure. Judas' life was a complete failure. Not for one moment did he enjoy his thirty pieces of silver. "Soon he perished as a suicide in the agonies of remorse. It would have 'been good for that man if he had not been born.'" Henceforth his name burns on the pages of history as the prince of traitors. "Even in *this* world the gains of sin are very small; even in *this* world the losses of sin are very great; but in the next world, there is *no* gain left to the sinner; the laughter is all past, the sorrow alone remains." Satan never *really* gives what he promises.[2]

III. THE TRIAL BEFORE PILATE, vers. 11–31.

Time. Between half past six and half past eight o'clock Friday morning, April 7.

Place. The judgment hall of Pilate, probably in the tower of Antonia, just outside of the northwest corner of the temple area, in Jerusalem. Possibly at Herod's palace on Mt. Zion, near the present Jaffa gate. Both were very large and very noted buildings.

Parallels. Mark 15: 1–19; Luke 23: 1–25; John 18: 28–19: 16.

Placing the four records together, we find three Roman trials: the first trial before Pilate, the trial before Herod, and the second trial before Pilate; and the avowed result of each was that Jesus was innocent.

FIRST TRIAL BEFORE PILATE.

11. From the hall of the Sanhedrim, Jesus was led, bound, to Castle Antonia, and stood before the governor.

The Court, or Pretorium, where Jesus was

[1] Prof. J. A. Broadus.

[2] See "The Lost Leader," in Mrs. Browning's *Poems*. "Just for a handful of silver he left us." Bulwer's *Poems* on Judas. Hawthorne's *Wonder-Book*, "The Golden Touch," or the story of Midas.

tried. Pretorium signifies the house of the pretor, or governor. "It was in part a tyrant's stronghold, and in part a fairy pleasure house." "The building itself, with a magnificent prospect over the whole of Jerusalem, spread out into two colossal marble wings, whose regal splendor far surpassed even the marvellous work of the Temple; . . . the floors and walls were covered with the rarest and most diverse stones. Outside, the buildings were surrounded by intricate colonnades of the most diversified architecture. Beyond these, again, were magnificent green parks with broad walks, deep canals, and cisterns which poured their water out of brazen mouths."[1]

PILATE, THE JUDGE. "The man before whom he was arraigned we know as one of the most unjust, violent, cruel, and dangerous of scourges, one who was truly what his name signified, the slaying 'Javelin' of the unhappy nation."[1] Philo (*Ad Caium*) speaks of "his corruption, his acts of insolence, his habit of insulting the people, his cruelty, his continual murders of people untried and uncondemned, and his never-ending and most grievous inhumanity at all times, a man of most ferocious passions, very merciless as well as very obstinate." This characterization throws light on his course in this trial.

(1) The Jews naturally expected that such a man would willingly put Jesus to death without special inquiry as to guilt.

(2) He greatly hated the Jews, who were a turbulent people, and was therefore more willing to spare Jesus to spite them, as he did try to insult them by the tablet over the cross.

(3) Yet he was afraid of the Jews, who had much cause to report him to the Emperor Tiberius, and would be glad of this political charge against him. They did do it six years later, and he was deposed.

And the governor asked him, after having heard the accusation of the Jews. They had condemned Jesus to death on the charge of

BLASPHEMY, THAT IS, TREASON AGAINST GOD AND THE JEWISH COMMONWEALTH.

They knew that Pilate would not accept the charge on which they had condemned him. They therefore first attempted to get Pilate to countersign their sentence, assuming that they would not have condemned him to death unless he was worthy of death. "If this man were not an evildoer, we would not have delivered him unto thee" (John 18: 30). Pilate was quite willing to let them take charge of the matter according to their privileges, and punish Jesus ecclesiastically, but they demanded his death. They therefore suppressed the religious accusation, and charged Jesus with

TREASON AGAINST THE ROMAN GOVERNMENT. "The greatest crime known to Roman law, the greatest crime conceivable by the Roman imagination." There were three counts in the charge.

THE FIRST COUNT. Sedition, perverting the nation, stirring up the people by his teaching all over the land. He was a revolutionist. There was a plausible basis of truth in this charge. One result of his teaching was a revulsion of feeling against the Pharisees and their conduct. It was working a silent revolution. But it was not sedition or treason against Rome, or any kind of political movement, however its spirit should in the end affect politics.

COMPARE King Ahab charging Elijah with troubling Israel, to which Elijah replied that it was the king and his sins that were making the trouble. It was like blaming the doctor for giving bitter medicine, as if he were the cause of the disease; or the fire bell for rousing the city, as if it were the cause of the disturbance; or the farmer for disturbing the ground full of brambles and weeds.

THE SECOND COUNT was "forbidding to give tribute to Cæsar" (Luke 23: 2), apparently a false inference from his saying that he was a king, as if he needed the tribute himself. The question about the tribute money on the previous Tuesday (Matt. 22: 16–22) shows that this charge lay in their minds. Christ's wise answer then foiled this deadly charge; so did his paying tribute himself, and his teaching to his disciples (Matt. 17: 24–27). It was a sheer, bold falsehood, and some of them at least must have known it. But, says the lawyer, Mr. Innes, "it would give the most deadly significance to the other vaguer and truer heads of the indictment, and would make it impossible for the governor to waive the capital charge." Pilate could not know but it might be true.

THE THIRD COUNT was that he claimed to be Christ, a king (Luke 23: 2, or, as in margin of R. V., "an anointed king"). This charge had a basis of truth. There was a sense in which Christ did claim to be a king, and he told Pilate so, as is shown in the conversation recorded in John 18: 33–38. Jesus was king, not in the Roman sense, but in the spiritual sphere, and there was no political collision of these spheres, however the spiritual in time might enfold the political as an all-pervasive, health-giving atmosphere. "Cæsar's empire," says Professor Stalker, "is over the bodies of men; this is over their hearts. The strength of Cæsar's empire is in soldiers, arms, citadels, and navies; the strength of this kingdom is in principles, sentiments, ideas."

This suggested the governor's question, **Art thou the King of the Jews?** as these Jews

[1] Theodor Keim, D. D.

12 [t] And when he was accused of (by) the chief priests and elders, he answered nothing.

13 Then said (saith) Pīlate unto him, [u] Hearest thou not how many things they witness against thee?

14 And he answered (gave) him to never a no answer, not even to one word; insomuch that the governor marvelled greatly.

t See ch. 26. 63. *u* John 19. 10.

accuse you of claiming to be. "In all the four Gospels these are the first words of Pilate to Jesus, and in all four there is an emphasis on 'thou.'[1] As if Pilate would say, in astonishment, Dost THOU, despised, forsaken, without a single follower, without weapons or wealth, claim to be King of these Jews? And yet Christ had claimed to be king; promulgated laws; organized in the heart of Cæsar's province the germ of an imperishable kingdom." **Jesus said unto him, Thou sayest.** This was a strong assertion that he was the King of the Jews: "What you say is true." See John's fuller and graphic account (John 18: 33–38).

12. He answered Pilate, for there was some chance of fairness in a Roman court, and he would not deny facts; but **when he was accused of** (by) **the chief priests and elders, he answered nothing**, for they would pervert everything he said, and no reply would have the least effect on those who had determined on his death for other reasons than the charges they brought against him.

14. **The governor marvelled greatly.** Jesus had spoken freely to him when alone; why should he refuse to answer now? How could he be calm and silent amid this storm of accusations? It was a silence possible only to an exalted nature full of self-control. Jesus, conscious of his divine power, able at any moment to have twelve legions of angels for his defence, maintains a calm, dignified, and impressive silence. Pilate, knowing nothing of his true nature, cannot comprehend the mystery.

THE VERDICT of Pilate was, I FIND NO FAULT IN THIS MAN.[2]

THE TRIAL BEFORE HEROD.
(Luke 23: 5–12.)

The leaders were so angry and fierce at the acquittal of Jesus by Pilate, and reiterated the charges with such passion and fury, that Pilate hesitated about releasing the prisoner. Perhaps he felt that the mob would murder Jesus if he set him free. In their charges they mentioned Galilee, which suggested to Pilate a way of escape from his dilemma. He must either incur the bitter hatred of the Jews, or he must burden his conscience with the damning crime of killing one whom he knew and had openly declared to be innocent. Jesus was a Galilean; and Herod Antipas, the governor of Galilee, was in the city. Pilate therefore sent Jesus to Herod as the one who should have jurisdiction over this case. This was the Herod who had murdered John the Baptist, and thought in his terror that Jesus was that prophet risen from the dead. "His reception was thoroughly characteristic." Unabashed at the past, he was "exceedingly glad." He had never seen Jesus, but he had heard of his marvellous wonders. He felt complimented by Pilate's attentions. "He put Jesus on the level of a new dancer or singer," and addressed him with many words, hoping to see some miracle done by him. Around him stood the chief priests and scribes vehemently accusing him. But Jesus refused to say one word. Why? Words would have done no good. Herod was insincere. The scribes were in steel mail against truth. Silence was the most effective appeal, the only effective appeal. "Jesus was silent that the voice of the dead Baptist might be heard." Herod was thwarted, a king by a peasant. He felt that Jesus was a pretender, and was unable to do the miracles attributed to him. He claimed to be a king, but now "his Messianic claims were exploded. It was not worth a king's anger, but here was a chance for a great stroke of wit. He was arrayed in a gorgeous robe, not a purple garment, but a white mantle, like that worn by Jewish kings and Roman grandees on high occasions. It was a parody of the royal claims of Jesus, but at the same time an indirect declaration of his innocence, at least in a political point of view."[3] "It was probably in imitation of the white robe

[1] *Cambridge Bible.*

[2] In Sidney Lanier's *Poems*, "The Crystal," he shows that in all men, all authors, — Homer, Socrates, Dante, Eschylus, — there is something for him to forgive, some flaw in the crystal, "some little mole that marks you brother, and your kinship seals to man:"

"But thee, but thee, O sovereign Seer of time,
But thee, O poet's Poet, Wisdom's tongue,
But thee, O man's best Man, O love's best Love,
O perfect life in perfect labor writ,
. . . . . .
Oh, what amiss may I forgive in thee,
Jesus, good Paragon, thou crystal Christ?"

[3] Prof. Godet.

15 [v] Now at *that* (the) feast the governor was wont to release unto the (people a multitude one) prisoner, whom they would.

16 And they had then a notable prisoner, called Bă-răb'bas.

17 (Therefore when When therefore) they were gathered together, Pī'late said unto them, Whom will ye that I release unto you? Bă-răb'bas, or [w] Jē'sus which is called Chrīst?

18 For he knew that [x] for envy they had delivered him (up).

19 ¶ (When And while) he was (set down sitting) on [y] the (judgment seat, judgement-seat), his wife sent unto him, saying, Have thou nothing to do with [z] that (just righteous) man: for I have suffered many things this day [a] in a dream because of him.

v For vers. 15–26, see Mark 15. 6–15 & Luke 23. 18–25 & John 18. 39, 40 & 19. 16. *w* ver. 22. *x* Cp. John 12. 19. *y* John 19. 13. Acts 12. 21 (mg.) & 18. 12 & 25. 6. *z* ver. 24. Cp. Luke 23. 47. *a* See ch. 2. 12.

worn at Rome by candidates for office." (Candidate means, literally, "white-robed.") "The suggestion was that Jesus was a candidate for the throne of the country, but one so ridiculous that it would be ridiculous to treat him with anything but contempt. Thus amid peals of laughter was Jesus driven from the presence." [1]

THE VERDICT in this trial also was (Luke 23: 15) that JESUS WAS INNOCENT OF CRIME.

THE SECOND TRIAL BEFORE PILATE.

Jesus was sent back to Pilate, whose attempt to escape from his responsibility was a failure. What follows is not so much a trial, as a battle between Pilate and the Jewish leaders. Pilate tries several expedients by which he hopes to avoid the danger of doing the one right and manly thing to do, namely, to release his innocent prisoner.[2]

FIRST EXPEDIENT. This was sending Jesus to Herod, as we have seen.

SECOND EXPEDIENT. Pilate summoned not only the rulers, but the people to hear the report from the court of Herod. He declared that Herod agreed with his former declaration that Jesus was innocent (Luke 23: 13–15).

THIRD EXPEDIENT. Pilate proposed to scourge Jesus, in the hope that this terrible suffering would satisfy the Jews (Luke 23: 16). It was a mean thing to do; and it was a failure, for nothing but the death of Jesus would deliver them from his influence against them, and they "would see that a judge who would be willing to inflict this on an innocent person could be induced by further pressure to inflict death." [3]

FOURTH EXPEDIENT. 15. **At that feast.** The Passover. **Wont to release unto the people a prisoner.** As a fitting accompaniment to a feast that celebrated the redemption of the nation from slavery. Thus it has been a custom in the Massachusetts State Prison to release one or two prisoners every Thanksgiving Day. **Whom they would.** The choice lay with them.

16. **A notable prisoner, called Barabbas.** "Barabbas was plainly a ringleader in one of those fierce and fanatic outbreaks against the Roman domination which fast succeeded one another in the latter days of the Jewish commonwealth." [4] This would naturally make him a favorite. He probably had attractive and popular qualities, like bold Robin Hood, of English history; but he was reckless, and doubtless had committed robbery and murder (Luke) under the name of patriotism.[5]

17. **Barabbas, or Jesus.** He hoped to get the influence of the people on his side against the rulers.

18. **For he knew that for envy they had delivered him,** not because he had committed any crime, but because of a petty jealousy at his growing influence, which was likely to supplant them in authority and power, and show to the people their real character.

THE DREAM OF PILATE'S WIFE. 19. **When** (while) **he was set down** (sitting) **on the judgment seat.** At this juncture during the trial. **His wife sent unto him,** etc. "Tradition has given her the name *Procula*. What if Procula had not only been a proselyte, like the wife of a previous Roman governor (Saturninus), but known about Jesus and spoken of him to Pilate on that evening? This would best explain his reluctance to condemn Jesus, as well as her dream of him." [6] **I have suffered many things this day in a dream,** which was to her a vision, sent to her because she would receive it, in order to deter Pilate from this great crime.[7] Often in dreams during exciting times, "coming events cast their

[1] Prof. Stalker, *The Trial and Death of Jesus.*

[2] Note Munkacsy's famous picture of *Christ before Pilate.*

[3] *Int. Crit. Com.*

[4] Trench.

[5] See Marie Corelli's *Barabbas*, in which this character is vividly portrayed.

[6] Edersheim.

[7] Recall Doré's picture, "The Dream of Pilate's Wife," described in Stalker's *Trial and Death of Jesus.*

20 But Now the chief priests and the elders persuaded the multitude multitudes that they should
ask for Bă-răb'bas, and destroy Jē'sus.
21 The But the governor answered and said unto them, Whether of the twain will
ye that I release unto you? They And they said, Bă-răb'bas.
22 Pī'late saith unto them, What then shall I do then with unto Jē'sus which is called
Chrīst? [c] They They all say, unto him, Let him be crucified.
23 And the governor he said, Why, [d] what evil hath he done? But they cried out
the more, exceedingly, saying, Let him be crucified.
24 ¶ When So when Pī'late saw that he could prevail prevailed nothing, but *that* rather rather that [e] a tumult was
made, arising, he took water, and [f] washed his his hands before the multitude, saying, I am
innocent of the blood of [g] this just person: righteous man: [h] see ye *to it*.
25 Then answered And all the people' answered and said, [i] His blood *be* on us, and [j] on our
children.

b Acts 3. 14. *c* Acts 13. 28. *d* Cp. Luke 23. 41 & John 8. 46. *e* ch. 26. 5. *f* Cp. Deut. 21. 6–8 & Ps. 26. 6 & 73. 13. *g* ver. 19. *h* ver. 4. *i* Cp. ch. 23. 35, 36 & Josh. 2. 19 & Acts 5. 28. *j* Cp. Ex. 20. 5 & Lam. 5. 7.

shadows before," and awful pictures of evil consequences pass before the mind.

20. On the other hand, this influence for good was counteracted by the Jewish rulers, who **persuaded the multitude that they should ask for Barabbas.**

21. Then when Pilate came out into the palace court, and asked the people, as before he had asked the rulers, **Whether of the twain will ye that I release unto you?** the answer was arranged, and **they said, Barabbas.** So this expedient failed.

22. **Pilate saith unto them, What shall I do then with Jesus which is called Christ?** Messiah. Pilate asked this question where he had no right to. He should have asked it of his conscience, of justice, of right, of truth, of honor, not of an excited mob. So men now ask questions about duty in this same wrong way. **They all say, . . . Let him be crucified.** This was not the Galilean crowd who had brought Jesus into the city, riding in triumph, with shouts of hosanna, but was a city mob, urged on by the authorities.

23. Then follows a picture of a wild scene, an excited mob screaming, gesticulating, shouting "Crucify him," the silent Jesus standing bound within their sight; and Pilate vainly endeavoring to quiet them by declaring the innocence of Jesus.[1] "This scene has often been alleged as the self-condemnation of democracy. *Vox populi, vox Dei*, its flatterers have said; but look yonder. When the multitude has to choose between Jesus and Barabbas, it chooses Barabbas. If this be so, the scene is equally decisive against aristocracy. Did the priests, scribes, and nobles behave better than the mob? It was by their advice that the mob chose."[2]

FIFTH EXPEDIENT, TO THROW THE RESPONSIBILITY ON OTHERS.

24. **When Pilate saw that he could prevail nothing.** He could not repress the mob, but he could have released Jesus. **He took water, and washed his hands before the multitude.** By this symbol, disowning all responsibility (Deut. 21 : 6, 9), as if his words could cleanse his soul from guilt, as the water washed the dirt from his hands. But all this made him none the less guilty; and he has been pilloried in history as the man who crucified the Son of God, even while knowing and confessing his innocence. Pilate may have hoped that if they were compelled to assume the responsibility they would shrink from it even as he did. If a cruel Roman governor was unwilling to condemn this innocent man, how much more should the representatives of the purest religion then known refuse to do the cruel and dastardly deed!

25. **His blood be on us, and on our children.** That blood was upon them, not as vengeance, but as a natural consequence of their conduct, as any one can see who reads the accounts. Within forty years the city was destroyed amid scenes of cruelty which defy description. And who knows what came upon them as individuals after death as the fitting consequence of their character and deeds!

THE VERDICT of this third trial was that JESUS WAS A RIGHTEOUS MAN. "Why, what evil hath he done?"

THE FATE OF THE MURDERERS. Of the Jewish leaders and their children thousands shared in the

[1] The hymn beginning: —

"I see the crowd in Pilate's hall,
I mark their wrathful mien,
Their shouts of 'Crucify' appall,
With blasphemy between."

[2] Prof. Stalker.

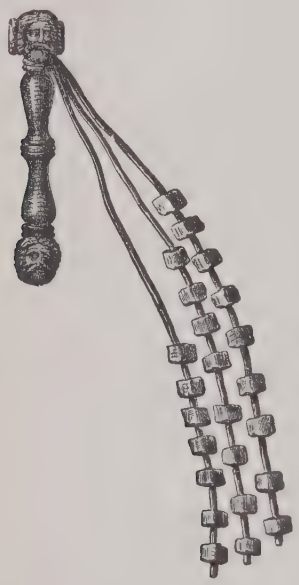
26 ¶ Then released he *unto them* Bă-răb'bas: *unto them: and when* [k] *he had scourged Je'sus, he but Je'sus he scourged and*
delivered *him* to be crucified.

27 [l] Then the soldiers of the governor took Jē'şus into the [m] *common hall,* *palace,* and gathered unto him the whole [n] band. *of soldiers.*

28 And they stripped him, and put on him a [o] scarlet robe.

k ch. 20. 19. Isai. 50. 6 & 53. 5. Cp. Luke 23. 16 & John 19. 1. *l* For vers. 27–31, see Mark 15. 16–20 & John 19. 2, 3. *m* John 18. 28, 33 & 19. 9. Acts 23. 35. Phil. 1. 13 (Gk.). *n* See Acts 10. 1. *o* Rev. 18. 12, 16. Cp. Luke 23. 11.

horrors of the destruction of Jerusalem, "and on that very spot was judgment pronounced against some of the best in the city; and among the thirty-six hundred victims of the governor's fury, of



Flagellum, or Roman Scourge.

whom not a few were scourged and crucified right over against the pretorium, were many of the noblest of the citizens of Jerusalem." [1] Pilate was soon recalled, degraded, banished to Gaul, where he committed suicide. The tower from which he is said to have precipitated himself is still standing. The prize for which he staked his soul never became his. Herod died in infamy and exile. Caiaphas was deposed the next year.[2] "The house of Annas was destroyed a generation later by an infuriated mob, and his son was dragged through the streets, and scourged, and beaten to his place of murder." [3]

WHAT SHALL WE DO WITH JESUS WHICH IS CALLED CHRIST? This is a question every person must answer, "What shall I do with Jesus?" (1) Every person must do something with Jesus. He must accept or reject him. (2) Some try to escape this decision: (*a*) by refusing to decide; but that is deciding against him; (*b*) by substituting other virtues in the place of believing in Christ; (*c*) by laying the blame on others, on circumstances, on temptations. But it is all in vain. (3) To reject Christ is to reject the sum and soul of all goodness. Therefore rejecting Christ is the great sin of the world, for it belongs to the deepest nature of the soul. (4) Christ is rejected from wrong and selfish motives. (5) There will come a time when there will be a different question to answer, — What shall I do *without* Jesus? In the hour when we feel our sins unforgiven; in the hours of sickness, need, death; in the day of judgment; who then can endure to do without Jesus, his forgiving love, his divine help, his comforting presence?

26. **And when he had scourged Jesus,** φραγελλώσας, from a noun of which the Latin *flagellum* is almost a transcription. "The word used for the scourging implies that it was done, not with rods, for Pilate had no lictors, but with what Horace calls the *horribile flagellum*, of which the Russian knout is the only modern representative." [3] "The scourge was made of several thongs with a handle; the thongs were made rough with bits of iron or bone, for tearing the flesh, and, thus fitted, it was called a *scorpion*." [4] Perhaps this was done to touch the hearts of the people, so that this cruel punishment might suffice instead of crucifixion, as Pilate had suggested earlier in the trial. **He delivered him to be crucified.** The last argument of the Jews, and the one which prevailed, is recorded by John (19: 12, 13). They declared that if Pilate released Jesus, he would prove himself an enemy to Cæsar and the Roman government, because Jesus claimed to be a king.

THE MOCKERY. 27. **Then the soldiers . . . took Jesus,** out of the court room, **into the common hall,** one of the inner courts of the palace. **The whole band** joined in the mockery.

28. **Put on him a scarlet robe** (κοκκίνην from κόκκος, *cochineal*, which grew in several

[1] Edersheim. [2] G. W. Clark. [3] Farrar. [4] Jacobus.

29 ¶ And when they had platted a crown of thorns, they put *it* upon his head, and a reed in his right hand: and they bowed the knee before him, and *p* mocked him, saying, Hail, *q* King of the Jews!

30 And they *r* spit upon him, and took the reed, and smote him on the head.

31 And after that they had mocked him, they took the robe off from him, the robe, and put on him his own raiment on him, and *s* led him away to crucify *him*.

32 *t* And *u* as they came out, they found a man of Cy-re'ne, Si'mon by name: him they *v* compelled to go *with them*, that he might *t* bear his cross.

p ch. 20. 19. *q* See ver. 11. *r* See ch. 26. 67. *s* Isai. 53. 7. *t* Mark 15. 21. Luke 23. 26. Cp. John 19. 17. *u* Heb. 13. 12. Cp. ch. 21. 39 & Num. 15. 35. *v* ch. 5. 41 (& mg. for mg.).

parts of Greece). Either "the red robe, the soldier's common mantle, representing the purple robe worn by kings," [1] or a cast-off royal robe.[2]

29. **Platted a crown of thorns**, the green leaves of which would represent the laurel wreath

Palestine Thorns.

worn by conquerors like Cæsar himself, while the thorns added to the pain. **And a reed**, the large stalk of which represented a sceptre.

30. **They spit upon him**, in place of the humble reverence given to kings.

Sixth Expedient, Ecce Homo, Behold the Man! We have a description in John of one more effort by Pilate to save Jesus from death. He seems to have been touched by the demeanor of Jesus during the mocking insults, and he had Jesus brought out to the Jews bleeding from the scourging, and wearing the crown of thorns and the purple robe (John 19: 5, 6), and said, "*Ecce Homo*," Behold, the man! Let us hear the *Ecce Homo*, and behold the man before us. Here is the noblest exhibition of love; here is a perfect example; here are all the highest virtues in their highest exercise; here is the fulfilment of ages of prophecy; here is the atonement in progress for the redemption of man; here is the central battle, and here is to be the central victory of the universe. Jesus is, as it were, a composite photograph of all the best in human nature, including all types and all races. He is the ideal man.

One recalls Shakespeare's words

> "His life was gentle, and the elements
> So mixed in him, that Nature might stand up
> And say to all the world, This was a Man!"

This was the last resort. It failed. And Jesus was led away to be crucified.

Section XXIV. — THE CRUCIFIXION, vers. 31–66.

Time. Friday, April 7, from nine A. M. to three P. M.

Place. Calvary (Golgotha), just outside the city of Jerusalem, probably on the north, two hundred yards from the Damascus gate.[3]

Parallels. Mark 15 : 21–47; Luke 23: 26–56; John 19: 16–42.

I. ON THE WAY TO THE CROSS.

32. **And as they came out of the city** by the Damascus gate, **they found a man of Cyrene**, a city of Libya on the north coast of Africa. **Him they compelled to bear his cross**, because Jesus, weak and weary from his long vigils and sufferings, was staggering under its weight. Farrar says that when Simon took the cross he bore it entirely, not as the pictures represent. But Schaff says, "The expression in Luke (23: 26) shows that the after-part of the cross alone, which usually dragged upon the ground, was put upon Simon." Morison unites the two, and suggests that "Simon, after assisting for a little in carrying the burden, may have insisted on bearing the entire weight."

[1] Godet.

[2] "Garments of this color would seem to have been rare among the Orientals. Herodotus relates that the admiration of Darius, then an officer in the army, was excited by the scarlet cloak of a Samian exile, who, on his offering to purchase it, presented it to him, and was afterward richly rewarded when Darius came to the throne (iii. 139)." — *Prof. M. R. Vincent.*

[3] See *The Site of Calvary*, by Hon. Selah Merrill.

33 *w* And when they were come unto a place called Gŏl'gō-thà, that is to say, [a] The place of a skull,

w For vers. 33–51, see Mark 15. 22–38 & Luke 23. 32–38, 44–46 & John 19. 17–19, 23, 24, 28–30.

THE ROUTE. The distance from Castle Antonia to the hill which is probably the site of Calvary is about three quarters of a mile. The procession first moved westward through the Via Dolorosa, to the road leading northward to the Damascus gate. Passing through the gate, it turned eastward along the north wall of the city, winding north and west over the eastern end of Calvary till they reach the western and highest summit.

THE SAD PROCESSION. In advance was a soldier carrying a white wooden board on which was written the nature of the crime. Next came four soldiers, under a centurion, with the hammer and the nails, guarding Jesus, who bore, as always in such cases, the cross on which he was to suffer (John 19 : 17, R. V.). Then came two robbers, each bearing his cross and guarded by four soldiers. As they went forth into the street they were followed by a great multitude, — many with eager curiosity ; priests exulting over their enemy ; Mary, with other women, weeping (Luke 23 : 27).

This scene is vividly described in *Ben Hur:* "He was nearly dead. Every few steps he staggered as if he would fall. A stained gown, badly torn, hung from his shoulders over a seamless under-tunic. An inscription on a board was tied to his neck. A crown of thorns had been crushed hard down upon his head." "The mob sometimes broke through the guard and struck him with sticks, and spit upon him. Yet no sound escaped him, neither remonstrance nor groan."

Luke gives us the touching story of the women of Jerusalem expressing their sympathy with Jesus. They "bewailed and lamented him" on this weary walk. It was probably just outside of the city that Jesus turned and spoke to them. Forgetting his own sufferings, he appealed to them to use their influence to avert the terrible doom of the city, which was to fall so heavily on the women and children.[1]

II. THE CRUCIFIXION.

33. **And when they were come unto a place called Golgotha**, Aramaic, as Calvary is the Latin, for **the place of a skull**, from its resemblance to a skull, especially in the afternoon shadows as seen from Olivet.

"Two hundred yards outside the Damascus gate of Jerusalem there is an isolated white limestone knoll, in contour like the crown of the head and about sixty feet high. It contains in its perpendicular face the most remarkable resemblance to a skull. The two eyeless sockets, the overhanging forehead, the lines of the nose, the mouth, and chin will be plainly seen. It is also concave, and the same color as a skull. On the summit of Golgotha there is a great pit heaped over with stones. It was customary to bury the crucified at the foot of the cross. This pit is filled with the skeletons and bones of criminals who, from time immemorial, have been crucified and stoned. The bodies of criminals are still hurled into that same pit. A mighty earthquake upheaved this solid earth and split this very rock asunder. To the right of the skull the face of the cliff is oddly riven. In springtime Calvary is carpeted with scarlet anemones and the Calvary flower, which appear like drops of blood covering the white limestone. At the bottom of the western cliff there is a large garden with a very ancient well. Where it touches the foot of the cliff, six feet below the surface, the rock-hewn sepulchre of our Lord has been discovered. There is now a general consensus of agreement that this is the true Calvary. It alone fulfils the numerous and precise descriptions and the point of the compass 'northward' indicated by the Scriptures."[2]

[1] LEGEND OF VERONICA. Two very interesting legends often referred to belong to this journey. One is that a great lady of Jerusalem, desiring to comfort Jesus, had prepared a cordial to give him as he passed her house. She forced her way through the mob and the soldiers, and, offering her rich linen veil, said, "Permit me to wipe the face of my Saviour!" Jesus took it and applied it to his bleeding face, and the blood stained the linen with the imprint of his face, which remained a perfect likeness of his features. — From *Tissot.* This is, of course, a legend, but it expresses the true feeling of the time, and a prophecy of what woman was to do for her Saviour.

TRADITION OF THE WANDERING JEW. This tradition is that a Jew, as Jesus with the cross passed his place of business and leaned for rest against his porch, struck him a blow and harshly bade him move on; to which the Lord replied, turning to his assailant, "Thou shalt go on and never stop till I come again!" To this day the miserable man wanders over the earth unable to find rest or to die. Lew Wallace, in his *Prince of India*, makes use of this legend, and it plays a somewhat prominent part in literature. Dr. Stalker interprets the legend thus: "It is, I suppose, a fantastic representation, in the person of an individual, of the tragic fate of the Jewish race, which since the day when it laid violent hands on the Son of God has had no rest for the sole of its foot." It is also a symbol of the soul that rejects Jesus from its heart and life.

[2] William Brryman Ridges, in *The Biblical World* for Nov., 1896.

34 [x] They gave him vinegar to drink mingled with [y] gall: and when he had tasted thereof, he would not drink.

35 And when they had crucified him, and [z] parted his garments, casting lots: that it might be fulfilled which was spoken by the prophet, They parted my garments among them, and upon my vesture did they cast lots.

x Cp. Ps. 69. 21. y Acts 8. 23. z Ps. 22. 18.

34. **They gave him vinegar**, the common "mixture of sour wine or vinegar and water which the Roman soldiers were accustomed to drink."[1] The R. V., translating from another reading of the text, says "wine," but it refers to the same thing. **Mingled with gall.** "It was a kindly custom of the Jewish ladies," says Lightfoot, "to give to those who were being crucified a stupefying draught of wine mingled with a powerful narcotic drug, bitter, but offered as an anæsthetic, to stupefy and dull the sense of pain." **When he had tasted thereof**, recognizing this beautiful act of kindness, and at the same time learning that the draught contained the stupefying drug, he resolutely put it away, although he was burning with thirst. Why? (1) He deliberately chose to have all his powers alert at this last hour, "so that nothing could dull his consciousness of suffering nor the clearness of his communion with God."[2] (2) Because he would drink to the very dregs the cup of suffering which God gave him. It was an act of sublime heroism and courage.

35. **And they crucified him.** Jesus was nailed to the cross while it was lying upon the ground, then it was slowly raised with the sufferer upon it. The feet of the sufferer were only a foot or two above the ground, and not as represented in most pictures, and in the Oberammergau Passion Play. "Crucifixion was an unspeakably awful form of death." Cicero, who was well acquainted with it, says: "It was the most cruel and shameful of all punishments. But the most revolting feature of death by crucifixion was that the torture was deliberately prolonged. The victim usually lingered a whole day, sometimes two or three days, still retaining consciousness; while the burning of the wounds in the hands and feet, the uneasiness of the unnatural position, the oppression of overcharged veins, and, above all, the intolerable thirst, were constantly increasing."[3] Jesus was upon the cross five or six hours. But the most intense sufferings of Jesus were of the spirit. He was bearing the sins of the world.[4]

Seven times Jesus spoke during the crucifixion; each time is commonly called *a word*. Each of the seven words from the cross expressed some characteristic element of his nature or his work.

THE FIRST WORD FROM THE CROSS,—**Father, forgive them; for they know not what they do** (Luke 23: 34).

Probably spoken in the height of the agony, when the cross with the victim upon it was dropped with a sudden wrench into its place in the ground. This expressed Christ's feeling of love toward his enemies, who were committing a crime which stands alone in all history.[5]

III. SCENES AROUND THE CROSS.

DIVIDING HIS GARMENTS. **And the four soldiers on guard parted his garments, casting lots.** The garments of executed criminals being their customary perquisites, the guard divided among themselves his outer robe, headdress, sandals, and girdle; but they cast lots for his tunic, or under-garment, reaching from the neck to the feet, which being woven in one piece would be useless if divided into parts (John 19: 23, 24).

35. **That it might be fulfilled which was spoken by the prophet** (omitted in the R. V., as an accidental interpolation from John 19: 23, 24, where it rightly belongs). The Scripture referred to is quoted from Ps. 22: 18, Septuagint version. This psalm is a Messianic psalm. "The central thought in the original context is that the enemies of the Lord's Anointed treated him as already dead, and so disposed of his raiment."[6] "Whether we take the Psalm as typical or predictive, in any case it is a prophecy of Christ and of his sufferings on the cross."[7]

NOTE. (1) The soldiers gambled for his small outward possessions, carelessly, in the presence of the greatest event in history, ignorant of the

[1] Thayer, *Greek-English Lexicon*.

[2] Lyman Abbott.

[3] Prof. Stalker.

[4] Cicero's *Oration against Verres* contains no little light on scourging and crucifixion. In the trial and death of Socrates, many interesting comparisons and contrasts present themselves. See Plato's *Apology of Socrates*, the *Crito*, and the *Phædo*. "Socrates died like a philosopher, Jesus Christ like a God." See Whittier's *Poems*, "The Crucifixion;" Dürer's *Little Passion* and his *Greater Passion*, each a series of engravings on this subject. Tissot's *Life of Our Lord*, 4 vols., has a large number of intensely interesting pictures of the various scenes belonging to the crucifixion.

[5] See Dora Greenwell's *Legend of Toulouse*, quoted in Dr. Nicoll's *Seven Words from the Cross*.

[6] Canon Westcott.

[7] Perowne on *The Psalms*.

36 And sitting down they (and they sat and) [a] watched him there:

37 And they set up over his head his accusation written, THIS IS JE'SUS [b] THE KING OF THE JEWS. (THIS IS JE'SUS THE KING OF THE JEWS.)

38 Then were there [c] two thieves crucified with him, two robbers, [d] one on the right hand, and another (one) on the left.

39 ¶ And [e] they that passed by [f] reviled (railed on) him, [g] wagging their heads,

40 And (and) saying, [h] Thou that destroyest the temple, and buildest (it) in three days, save thyself: [i] If (if) thou be (art) the [j] Son of God, come down from the cross.

a ver. 54. Cp. Ps. 22. 17. *b* vers. 11, 29. *c* Cp. John 18. 40. *d* Cp. ch. 20. 21. *e* Ps. 22 7 & 109. 25. Cp. Lam. 1. 12. *f* Luke 22. 65 & 23. 39. Cp. James 2. 7. *g* Job 16. 4. Isai. 37. 22. Jer. 18. 16. Lam. 2. 15. Ecclus. 12. 18. *h* ch. 26. 61. *i* ch. 4. 3, 6. *j* ver. 43. ch. 26. 63. See ch. 14. 33.

Son of God, and their own possible redemption from sin, at which saints and angels in glory were looking with intensest interest. What a picture! No small part of mankind bargaining with the good things of this world, which incidentally flow from the kingdom of Christ, but forgetting him, and God's love, and the redemption from sin, and spiritual and immortal blessings.

(2) The legacy of Jesus in worldly things was very small, a few paltry garments, but "he bequeathed a spiritual legacy ample enough to enrich the whole world."

(3) "This inner garment woven without seam has always been held to be a type of the one Holy Catholic Church, in the sight of God one and undivided." [1]

THE WATCHERS. 36. **They watched him there.** They were on guard, lest friends should come and take him down, and preserve his life. Josephus had a friend who was taken down from the cross and lived.[2] How little they realized the meaning of the scene! They were like birds on telegraph wires, utterly unconscious of the messages passing through, affecting the interests of nations.

Besides these careless ones, there were friendly watchers, as we learn from John (19: 25, 26). The three Marys were there: Mary, the mother of Jesus; Mary, the wife of Cleophas; and Mary Magdalene; his mother's sister; probably Salome, the mother of John; and many other women from Galilee. John was there; and the other disciples were doubtless not far away.

THE TITLE OVER THE CROSS. 37. **And set up over his head.** A white tablet was nailed upon the cross to declare the crime of the one crucified. **His accusation written,**

This is Jesus the King of the Jews.

It was written in three languages, — in Greek, the language of literature and culture, read in all cultured circles of the world; in Latin, for the Roman soldiers, the language of law and power; in Hebrew, the language of the Jews, the language of religion. It was a prophecy that the language of the cross itself should be heard everywhere, and include all the others, — a language of culture, of power, and of religion. Christianity is for the whole world. Pilate himself saw to this title. It was in mockery of the Jews, and yet possibly in honor of Jesus, for Pilate by his conversations with Jesus may have had some inkling of the truth. Certainly it was a true title, for it was on the charge of being a king that Jesus was crucified. Thus in the chief tongues of men was proclaimed in jest what became a living truth, — that Jesus is king; the king to whom all nations and peoples should yield allegiance. "He is a king with many crowns."

JESUS' COMPANIONS ON THE CROSS. 38. **Then were there two thieves,** robbers, **crucified with him,** probably with the intention of giving the people an impression that Jesus was to be classed with them. The motive may have been malice, but was more probably to take away the imputation of having punished an innocent man. But the scene was typical of Christ's mission. The prophecy of Scripture that pointed out the Messiah, "he shall be numbered with the transgressors," was fulfilled. He was the "friend of publicans and sinners," he came to seek and to save the lost. These very things honor him in heaven and on earth.

THE MOCKING CROWDS. Between nine o'clock and noon. 39. **They that passed by,** on the thoroughfare, near which the crosses stood, **reviled him.** His crucified condition was in such contrast with the title over him, and with his own words, as to excite the mirth of the crowd.

40. **Thou that destroyest the temple.** A perversion of Jesus' words (John 2: 19–21) which were brought against him at his trial (Matt. 26: 61). But it is remarkable that at this very hour the words he really spoke were in the process of being fulfilled. **If thou be the Son of God,**

[1] M. F. Sadler. See, also, *The Faith that makes Faithful*, "The Seamless Robe." [2] G. W. Clark, D. D.

41 Likewise
In like manner also the chief priests mocking *him*, with the scribes and elders, said,

42 *k* He saved others; *l* himself he cannot save. *m* If he be
He is the King of Ĭs′ra-el; let him now come down from the cross, and we will believe on him.

43 *n* He trusted in
trusteth on God; let him deliver him now, if he will have
desireth him: for he said, I am the Son of God.

44 *o* The thieves
And the robbers also, which
that were crucified with him, cast upon him the same in his teeth.
reproach.

45 Now from the sixth hour there was darkness over all the land unto
until the ninth hour.

k Cp. Luke 4. 23. *l* Cp. ch. 26. 53, 54 John 10. 18. *m* John 1. 49 & 12. 13. Cp. ver. 37. *n* Cited from Ps. 22. 8. Cp. Wisd. 2. 16–18. *o* Cp. Luke 23. 39–43.

come down from the cross. For if he was the Son of God, he would have abundant power to come down, but no human power of his own could release him. But in truth if he had used his power and come down, it would have proved him not to be the Son of God. He did not come down, *because he was* the Son of God.

41. **Likewise also the chief priests.** These spoke to one another, not to Jesus.

42. **He saved others; himself he cannot save.** Implying that his saving others was only imaginary, a cheat. But "if he had saved himself by coming down from the cross, he could not have saved others." One of the hardest things to bear was the taunts of those whom he came to save, the very taunts showing that they were unwilling to be saved.

42. **And we will believe him.** But they were mistaken; they would have found some other excuse for not believing, for he did something more wonderful — he rose from the grave, and yet they did not believe.

42, 43. **If he be the King of Israel . . . for he said, I am the Son of God.** Their logic seemed good from their point of view. If he was unable to deliver himself, how could he deliver others? If he can be crucified by men, how can he be great enough to be the Saviour of men? Their argument seems invincible, till we see that he could not be the Christ and Saviour *unless* he had been crucified.

44. **The thieves also.** Either both did at first, and then one changed; or, with much greater probability, the expression is simply a general one.

They joined in the ridicule, offering him their common sour wine, as a festive cup to a king (Luke).

Note. In the groups around the cross we see "three predominant states of mind," — in the soldiers, indifference, apathy; in the rulers, antagonism, hatred; in the women and disciples, sympathy. "Apathy, antipathy, sympathy."

Note. They were twitting him on what they called facts, but they were facts without a soul. Every one of these things which they ridiculed became "luminous, radiant, a light for the ages." "Every random word then spoken now shines on him like a star." Like the cross itself they were transfigured, as black smoke radiating rainbow glories in the light of the sun.

The Conversion of the Robber, Luke 23: 39–43. Toward noon, while the crowds were mocking, there was a most wonderful event taking place among the victims. Jesus was actually doing some of the work he came from heaven to do. One of the robbers, while hanging on the cross, was converted and forgiven, and began even then that new life which could be developed and nurtured in Paradise. He was probably not so much a hard-hearted man as a Jewish fanatic, who in his way had been trying to deliver the Jews from the Roman domination. It is more than probable that he had seen Jesus before, and known something of his teachings, his character, and his works.

At this time was spoken The Second Word from the Cross, — **Verily I say unto thee, Today shalt thou be with me in paradise.**

Jesus' Thoughtful Care for his Mother. John (19: 25–27) alone reports this incident, and he reports it from personal knowledge. Jesus saw his mother near the cross; she was probably a widow at this time, and might be involved in trouble or poverty from her relation to Jesus. She would need a comforter and a home. Near her stood John, the beloved disciple, more courageous in his love than Peter in his natural boldness. To him Jesus committed his mother in a most beautiful and graceful manner.[1]

The Third Word from the Cross, — **Woman, behold thy son! . . . Behold thy mother.**

Darkness over all the Land. Now from

[1] Compare the story told by Socrates of a poor man who, when dying, bequeathed his children to a friend.

46 And about the ninth hour Jē'sus [p] cried with a loud voice, saying, [q] Ē'lī, Ē'lī, lā'mà sà-bach-thā'nī? that is, [to say,] My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?

47 Some [And some] of them that stood there, when they heard [that,] said, This [man] calleth [for E-li'as. E-li'jah.]

48 And straightway one of them ran, and took a [sponge,] and filled [it] with [r] vinegar, and put [it] on a reed, and [s] gave him to drink.

p Cp. Heb. 5. 7. *q* Cited from Ps. 22. 1. *r* Ruth 2. 14. *s* Ps. 69. 21.

the sixth hour, twelve o'clock at noon, three hours, unto **the ninth hour**, three o'clock in the afternoon, **there was darkness over all the land.** How widely this extended is not stated, but certainly over the country around Jerusalem. How this was caused we do not know. It could not be an eclipse, as the moon was full. A darkness that suggests this once came in Connecticut, so deep that it seemed that the Judgment Day had come, and it was even proposed to adjourn the legislature on that account. It has been known since as "The dark day." One of the greatest of modern astronomers, speaking of a total eclipse, says, "The phenomenon, in fact, is one of the most terrible that man can witness, and no degree of partial eclipses gives any idea of its horrors."[1] Darkness was typical of the powers of darkness which seemed to be prevailing; of the great sufferings of the atonement for sin; of the darkness brooding over Jesus' heart; of the dark hour of sin and depravity that could crucify God's beloved Son; of the darkness of sin over all the earth, which was to be dispelled by the cross of Jesus and by his resurrection from the dead.

IV. THE DEATH OF JESUS THE CHRIST.

46. **About the ninth hour**, three o'clock in the afternoon, the hour of the daily evening sacrifice. The crucifixion was begun at nine o'clock in the morning, the hour of the daily morning sacrifice. This was fitting, since the daily sacrifice was a type of sacrifice of the Lamb of God for the sins of the world. **Jesus cried with a loud voice**, showing strength and intense suffering. **Eli, Eli, lama sabachthani** are the modified Hebrew of Psalm 22: 1.

THE FOURTH WORD FROM THE CROSS, — **My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?**

"The historical meaning of σαβαχθανεὶ is not *to leave alone*, but *to leave helpless*, denoting not the withdrawal of God himself, but of his help." In his agony, and the failing of his powers, it seemed as if God had forsaken him, and that the darkness which had shut out the light had destroyed the sun itself. He may have felt not only unutterable agony of body, but also that his mission itself had failed. It was a human experience in many an hour of darkness and despair, without which Jesus would not have been "in all points tempted like as we are, yet without *sin*." The experience of Jesus gives hope to us, for we can see that the forsaking was a feeling, not a fact; that even his words of despair implied faith in God; that very soon there came a resurrection triumph; and the experience has brought light to multitudes in their hours of darkness, a key of promise that opens the dungeon of Giant Despair; and by it he has drawn many hearts to himself.

47. **Some . . . said, This man calleth for Elias** (Elijah), misunderstanding "Eli," for Elias. They thought he was calling for help.

Closely following, as related by John (19: 28) came THE FIFTH WORD FROM THE CROSS, — **I thirst.** The sole expression of bodily suffering. This pain, as in the case of wounded soldiers, swallowed up all other agonies.[2] This expression of personal desire, the only favor asked, was an example of patience, and of the right of expression of such a request. Still from all humanity without the water of life goes up the cry, "I thirst," and we can satisfy Christ's thirst in giving them to drink. Matt. 25: 40. Jesus still thirsts for love, for prayer, for service, and we can give him to drink.

48. This cry of thirst, as reported by John, ex-

[1] "The *Gospel of Peter* (lately discovered) states that 'many went about with lamps, supposing it was night,' and that the darkness lasted until Jesus was taken from the cross, when the earthquake took place; 'then the sun shone out, and it was found to be the ninth hour.'" — *Int. Crit. Com.*

[2] "I remember once talking with a German student who had served in the Franco-Prussian war. He was wounded in an engagement near Paris, and lay on the field unable to stir. He did not know exactly what was the nature of his wound, and he thought that he might be dying. The pain was intense; the wounded and dying were groaning round about him; the battle was still raging; and shots were falling and tearing up the ground in all directions. But after a time one agony, he told me, began to swallow up all the rest, and soon made him forget his wound, his danger, and his neighbors. It was the agony of thirst. He would have given the world for a draught of water."— Prof. Stalker, *Trial and Death of Jesus Christ.*

49 The rest said, Let be; let us see whether E-li'as will come to save him.
50 ¶ And Je'sus, when he had [t]cried again with a loud voice, and [u]yielded up the ghost.
51 And, behold, the [v]vail of the temple was rent in twain from the top to the bottom; and [w]the earth did quake, and the rocks were rent;
52 And the graves were opened; and many bodies of [x]the saints [y]which slept arose that had fallen asleep
were raised;
53 And came out of the graves after his resurrection, and went into [z]the holy city, and appeared unto many.

t ver. 46. *u* Cp. John 10. 18. *v* Ex. 26. 31–33. 2 Chr. 3. 14. *w* ver. 54. *x* Cp. Dan. 7. 18, 22. *y* John 11. 11–13. Acts 7. 60 & 13. 36. 1 Cor. 15. 6, 18, 20. 1 Thess. 4. 13–15. 2 Pet. 3. 4. *z* See ch. 4. 5.

plains why they sought means to give him something to drink, when they thought he was calling for help from Elijah. **Vinegar**, cheap acid wine mingled with water. **Put it on a reed.** In John, "upon hyssop;" a hyssop stalk. **Gave him to drink.** "Hoffmann says that Jesus refused the intoxicating draught before the crucifixion began, that his senses might be kept clear; and that now he accepted the refreshing draught for the same purpose."

Common Hyssop (*Hyssopus officinalis*).
A stalk of this was used for presenting the sour wine to Jesus on the cross.

49. **The rest said, Let be.** Do not interfere.

Then Jesus uttered (John 19 : 30) THE SIXTH WORD FROM THE CROSS, — **It is finished.**

This is one word in the Greek, and it has been called "the greatest single word ever uttered." What was finished? His life's work, the cup of suffering, the atonement for the sins of the world, the old era and dispensation. "It is first, the Worker's Cry of Achievement; and, secondly, the Sufferer's Cry of Relief." [1]

50. **Jesus, when he had cried again with a loud voice,** not the faint note of one dying, but a shout of triumph, saying (Luke 23 : 46)

THE SEVENTH WORD FROM THE CROSS, — **Father, into thy hands I commend my spirit.**

This word teaches us how to die.

Yielded up the ghost. *Ghost* is old English for "spirit." His soul. Note how all of the evangelists speak of Christ's death as a departure, a separation of soul and body, and that a voluntary one.

V. ACCOMPANYING SIGNS.

51. **The vail of the temple was rent in twain.** This was the great veil which stretched across the temple between the *Holy Place*, where the priests ministered in their daily service, and the *Holy of Holies*. "Within this veil no one was allowed to enter, on pain of death, save the high priest, and he only once a year, on the great day of Atonement." Lev. 16. This veil was 60 feet long, 30 feet wide, and of the thickness of the palm of the hand, and so heavy that it was said to require 300 priests to manipulate it. Josephus describes this curtain as "of Babylonian texture, and wonderfully stitched of blue, white, scarlet, and purple, representing the universe in its four elements, — scarlet standing for fire and blue for air by their colors, and the white linen for earth and the purple for sea on account of their derivation, the one from the flax of the earth and the other from the shellfish of the sea." [2] When Jesus uttered his exultant shout, "It is finished," this veil was rent from top to bottom. The rending of the veil typified that the veil that shut out the vision of holiness from the hearts of the people had been taken away (2 Cor. 3 : 14–16), and the way into the Holy Place, the state of holiness and the place of holiness, was now opened.

And the earth did quake. At the moment of Jesus' departure there was an earthquake of such power as to rend the rocks and open the tombs; showing how nature, the handiwork of the Son of God, sympathized with the mighty struggle that was going on.[2]

52, 53. **And the graves,** rock-sepulchres, **were opened** by the earthquake. **And many bodies of the saints which slept arose,** not at this time, but **after his resurrection.** Jesus was "the first-

[1] W. Robertson Nicoll, *The Seven Words from the Cross.*

[2] See Shakespeare's *Julius Cæsar*, Act. I., scene 2; Act II., scene 2; *Macbeth*, Act II., scene 2; *Hamlet*, Act I., scene 1. Stalker's *Trial and Death of Jesus.*

54 [a] Now [when] the centurion, and they that were with him [b] watching Jē'şus, [when they] saw the earthquake, and [those things] that were done, [they] feared [greatly, exceedingly,] saying, [c] Truly this was the [d] Son of God.

55 And [e] many women were there beholding [f] [afar off, from afar,] which had followed Jē'şus from Găl'ĭ-lee, [g] ministering unto him:

56 [Among which, among whom] was [g] Mā'rў Măg-dą-lē'nē, and Mā'rў the mother of Jāmeş and Jō'sēş, and the [h] mother of [Zeb'e-dee's children, the sons of Zeb'e-dee.]

57 [i] [When the, And when] even was come, there came a rich man [of, from] Ăr-ĭ-mă-thæ'ą, named Jō'şeph, who also himself was Jē'şus' disciple:

a For vers. 54–56, see Mark 15. 39–41 & Luke 23. 47, 49. *b* ver. 36. *c* ver. 43. *d* Cp. Dan. 3. 25 (for mg.). *e* John 19. 25. *f* Ps. 38. 11. *g* See Luke 8. 2, 3. *h* ch. 20. 20. Cp. Mark 15. 40. *i* For vers. 57–61, see Mark 15. 42–47 & Luke 23. 50–56 & John 19. 38–42.

fruits of them who sleep" (1 Cor. 15: 20), and "the first-born from the dead" (Col. 1: 18); but it was fitting that the victorious risen Christ should be attended by those who were raised from the dead by him, and that he who was the resurrection and the life should show his victory over death by some specimens and examples, by which the early Christians could realize the great truth of the resurrection and the immortal life, and see prefigured the moral resurrection from the death of sin. Therefore those who were thus raised appeared unto many.

All these signs were the appropriate and symbolical accompaniments of the great spiritual crisis which had just transpired.

54. **Now when the centurion**, who had charge of the crucifixion, **and they that were with him . . . saw . . . those things that were done, they feared greatly**, and "smote their breasts" (Luke) in self-reproach at awful wrong done, and foreboding the punishment that would come upon the city for this crime, as Jesus had foretold. And they glorified God for such a life as that just ended, and declared that Jesus was innocent of the charges brought against him; **saying, Truly this was the Son of God**, the Messiah he claimed to be.

56. **Mary Magdalene**, that is, Mary of Magdala, out of whom Jesus cast seven demons. **Mary the mother of James**, "the little" or "the less" *i. e.*, junior (Mark 15: 40) and Joses. She was probably the wife of Cleophas, or Clopas (John 19: 25). (There is much division of opinion as to the identity of some of these persons.) **The mother of Zebedee's children.** Salome, the mother of the apostles John and James. Mary, the mother of Jesus, was with them (John). They were "faithful unto death."

VI. THE BURIAL.

Between four and six o'clock Friday afternoon, near Calvary.

PROOFS THAT JESUS WAS REALLY DEAD. Every precaution was taken, not by the disciples, but by the government, to make sure that Jesus was really dead. (1) The Roman centurion assured Pilate of the death of Jesus (Mark 15: 44, 45). (2) The soldiers pierced his body with a spear, and from the wound flowed blood and water, — a proof of death (John 19: 34, 35). This proof was necessary in the providence of God, because unless Jesus actually died there could be no real resurrection.

57. **When the even was come**, "the so-called first or early evening, just before the close of the Jewish day."[1] **There came**, to the place of execution, **a rich man of** (from) **Arimathæa.** It is uncertain where Arimathæa was situated. It is probable that it was either Rama in Benjamin (Matt. 2: 18; Josh. 18: 25), five miles north of Jerusalem, or Ramathaim Zophim, the birthplace of Samuel (1 Sam. 1: 1, 19), in the highlands of Ephraim, but the exact locality is disputed. **Named Joseph.** "One Joseph takes care of his infancy, another provides for his burial."[2] He was a member of the Sanhedrim, but one who had not consented to its action, "of honorable estate." His wealth and position are named, for only such a one could own a rock-hewn tomb near Jerusalem.

We can read the progress of his religious experience in the notices given in the Gospels. (1) "He was a good man and just" (Luke). (2) He was "looking for the kingdom of God" (Mark and Luke). (3) He became a disciple, but secretly for fear of the Jews (John), then (4) at this time he **also himself was Jesus' disciple**, open and confessed. The scenes around the cross seem to have kindled into new life the secret discipleship, and given him and Nicodemus a faith which wrought in them courage, consecration, love, and open confession of Christ.

[1] Meyer.

[2] Prof. Schaff.

58 He (this man) went to Pī′late, and begged (asked for) the body of Jē′sus. Then Pī′late commanded the body (it) to be delivered (given up).

59 And when Jō′seph had taken (took) the body, he (and) wrapped it in a clean linen cloth,

60 And (and) [j] laid it in his own new tomb, [k] which he had hewn out in the rock: and he rolled a [l] great stone to the door of the sepulchre (tomb), and departed.

61 And there was Mā′rȳ Măg-da-lē′nē, was there, and [m] the other Mā′rȳ, sitting over against the sepulchre.

62 Now the next day, that followed the day of (on the morrow, which is *the day* after) [n] the preparation (Preparation), the chief priests and the Phăr′ĭ-sees came (were gathered) together unto Pī′late,

j Cp. Isai. 53. 9. *k* Isai. 22. 16. *l* Mark 16. 4. Cp. John 11. 38. *m* ver. 56. ch. 28. 1. *n* Mark 15. 42. Luke 23. 54. John 19. 14, 31, 42.

58. **This man went to Pilate, and begged the body of Jesus.** Only chief men and leaders among the Jews could have gone to him on this

Entrance to Tomb of the Kings near Jerusalem, showing the Circular Stone against the Mouth.

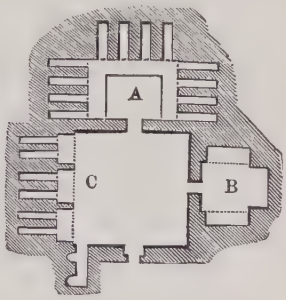
mission with success. Pilate's experience during the trial doubtless made him more willing to grant the request.

59. **When Joseph had taken the body.** Nicodemus, also a member of the Sanhedrim, who early in Jesus' ministry had gone to him by night, joined with Joseph in this sacred service (John), bringing with him a hundred-pound weight (λίτρας, pounds of 12 ounces) of myrrh and aloes, to preserve the body from decomposition. With these spices they wrapped the body of Jesus in a clean linen cloth.

60. **Laid it in his own new tomb,** in which no one had ever been buried, so there could be no doubt as to the identity of the body of Christ. **Rolled a great stone to the door.** Perhaps like one lately discovered near the probable site of Calvary outside the Damascus gate, which Canon Tristram visited.

He went down some steps, "and then, turning into a narrow passage hewn in the rock, found a recess or niche into which the stone door could be rolled back. This door, which must have been inserted during the building, or rather the excavating, of the tomb, was really a circular slab, like a huge millstone, with holes here and there for the insertion of spokes, by which it could be turned and rolled back into the niche we had before visited. But it would require several men, working together, to move it."[1]

61. **Mary Magdalene, and the other Mary** (ver. 56) saw the burial, watched the tomb for



Plan of Tomb.

a while, and then went home to prepare spices and ointments for the completion of the embalming, and then rested over the Sabbath (Luke).

62. **Now the next day,** Saturday, the Jewish

[1] *Sunday-School Times.*

63 Saying, saying, Sir, we remember that [o]that deceiver said, while he was yet alive, [p]After three days I will rise again.

64 Command therefore that the sepulchre be made sure until the third day, [q]lest haply his disciples come by night, and steal him away, and say unto the people, He is risen from the dead: so and the last error shall will be worse than the first.

65 Pī'late said unto them, Ye have [r]a watch: guard: go your way, make it as sure as ye can.

66 So they went, and made the sepulchre sure, [s]sealing the stone, and setting a the guard being watch. with them.

o Cp. ver. 64 & John 7. 12. *p* ch. 16. 21 & 17. 23 & 20. 19 & 28. 6. Mark 8. 31 & 10. 34. Luke 9. 22 & 18. 33 & 24. 6, 7. Cp. ch. 26. 61 & John 2. 19. *q* Cp. ch. 28. 13. *r* ch. 28. 11. *s* Dan. 6. 17.

Sabbath, **that followed the day of the preparation**, rather as R. V. (omitting "the day of"), "the Preparation," a technical term for the day before the Sabbath, or any of the feast days. It is supposed by some that the term "Preparation" became, before Matthew wrote, the solemn designation among the Christians to distinguish the Friday of the Crucifixion. **The chief priests . . . came together unto Pilate**, at the risk of infringing on their own Sabbath laws which they blamed Jesus for disregarding.

63. **We remember** (aorist), it has just occurred to us **that that deceiver said, . . . After three days I will rise again.** This had been repeatedly said by Jesus to his disciples, and had become known more or less to the general public, especially as interpreted by some hints Jesus himself had given (John 2 : 19 ; 10 : 15, 17, 18 ; Matt. 12 : 40).

64. **Command therefore that the sepulchre be made sure.** Thus in their attempt to put an end to the influence of Jesus, they did exactly what was needed to make it more sure that he was the Messiah and actually rose from the dead. **Lest his disciples come by night, and steal him away.** It was taken for granted that he was really dead, but they feared deception on the part of his friends. **The last error shall be worse than the first.** The last error of the people in thinking that Jesus must be the Messiah because he had risen from the dead, would be worse than their first error of thinking that he was the Messiah on account of his teachings and wonderful works.

65. **Pilate said unto them, Ye have a watch, or guard** ; rather, in the imperative, Have a guard, Ye shall have a guard.

66. **Sealing the stone.** One or more cords were stretched across the stone rolled before the opening into the tomb and sealed at each end to the rock by wax or sealing-clay. **And setting a watch.** A guard of Roman soldiers was placed at the entrance to the tomb, as a double means of preventing fraud.

LESSONS FROM THE CRUCIFIXION.

1. The dying words of a beloved one often reveal the inmost heart, beyond what we had sounded before ; so the seven words from the cross are most precious to every one who loves Jesus. There are besides these many other voices from the cross, silent voices, but heard by the heart, — voices from heaven, voices from the heart of God, voices of love and pity and forgiveness and hope.

2. "The cross was planted on Golgotha a dry, dead tree ; but lo ! it has blossomed like Aaron's rod ; it has struck its roots down to the heart of the world, and sent its branches upward, till today it fills the earth, and the nations rest beneath its shadow, and eat of its pleasant fruits."[1] The cross is the tree of life in the midst of the paradise of God. It resembles the mystic tree Ygdrasil, under whose roots are fountains of wonderful virtues ; whose branches spread over the whole world and reach above the heavens, and drop honey.

3. The great central event in the history of the world is the coming of Jesus Christ into the world, including his life, his death, and his resurrection. The centuries circle around his personality. As all the stars of heaven are said to be moving around the star Alcyone in the Pleiades, so all the Bible and all history move around the cross of Christ as their centre. "The cross of Jesus must ever remain the one bright centre of all our hopes and all our songs," of our love, of all good influences, of heaven itself. "'Waterloo,' says Victor Hugo, 'is the change of front of the universe.' Nearer truth is this : Calvary is the change of front of the universe."[2] "Christ's tomb was the grave of the old world, and the cradle of the new."[3]

4. The sacrifice on the cross, making atone-

[1] Prof. Stalker. [2] J. L. Hurlbut, D. D. [3] Lamartine.

ment for sin, expresses the infinite love of God for man. "The real meaning of His atonement is the revelation of a suffering God behind the suffering Christ."[1] Christ proved the greatness of his love by what he was willing to suffer for those he loved. Ruskin says that "the fountain in which sins are indeed washed away is that of love, not of agony."[2] But the agony was the measure and the proof of love. It declares God's love to man "in letters that can be read from the stars." Sometimes we recoil from the thought of the blood of Christ so often referred to in the Bible, — there are those who would keep these things from their children, — yet we do not shrink from it in other things. We read even to children the story of the giant-killer. The fact is that there is no other way to express in language that all can understand the highest degrees of heroism, courage, self-sacrifice, and love. It is these qualities we see rather than the agony.

5. The atonement on the cross was a voluntary sacrifice. God did not punish an innocent person, in order to save sinners from the punishment due for their sins. Christ offered himself, of his own choice, because he loved man so deeply. When the Greeks were besieging Troy, and met with ill success, the priest Calchas told them that the only way to appease the offended goddess, and gain the victory, was to sacrifice to Diana, Iphigenia, the beautiful daughter of King Agamemnon. And these brave men of old are said to have taken her by strategy and force, and brought this innocent girl to the altar to slay her in their stead. This sacrifice (though she was rescued) was unworthy of them, was mean and unjust beyond words to express. So, too, Tennyson's *The Victim* represents the priests of Thor and Odin as demanding of the king a human life to assuage the anger of their gods against the land expressed in famine and plague, and fires and foes, like the troubles that came upon Job, —

> "Were it our nearest,
> Were it our dearest,
> We give you his life."

But this has no resemblance to the sacrifice of God's Son, who gave himself for us, as English soldiers win the Victoria Cross by rescuing others at the fearful danger of their own lives; as a brave man saves a child from drowning or from fire. Whenever any persons have offered themselves, as Horatius and his comrades at the bridge of Rome, or the nobles of Calais to Edward the Sixth, the sacrifice has been the height of heroism. The sacrifice expressed the highest love possible.

6. The cross expresses God's feelings toward sin, his readiness to forgive sin, the terrible evil and danger of sin that costs such a sacrifice for deliverance from it. No one would suffer so much to save others from a slight evil or little danger.

7. Every power and every motive that can touch the heart of man to lift him out of sin into the kingdom of heaven radiates from the cross, as the completion of the sacrifice of Christ. (1) It enabled God to offer forgiveness, and yet to honor his law, so that men would be even more careful to keep the law than if they saw the wicked punished. (2) It proves to us that God is ready to forgive. (3) It shows the evil of sin, since salvation from it demands so great a cost. (4) It shows that we cannot enter heaven unless we are cleansed from sin. (5) It proves the love of God to man. (6) It furnishes every possible motive for turning from sin, touching the heart with love, showing our danger, teaching the law of duty, which dies rather than fail or neglect, giving us hope of forgiveness and life. (7) It shows the value of our souls, to be worth such a price. (8) It shows the value of salvation, and the worth of eternal life in heaven. (9) All this will be in vain, unless we repent and believe. (10) But through the death of Christ came the gift of the Holy Spirit who makes effective all these powers.

8. On the cross, as often in the history of the kingdom of God, seeming defeats have been real victories. The famous battle at the pass of Thermopylæ was a defeat, but has thrilled the ages because it was a moral victory.

> "Truth forever on the scaffold, wrong forever on the throne.
> Yet that scaffold sways the future, and behind the dim unknown
> Standeth God within the shadow, keeping watch above his own.
>
> . . . . . .
>
> Though the cause of Evil prosper, yet 't is Truth alone is strong,
> And, albeit she wander outcast now, I see around her throng
> Troops of beautiful, tall angels, to enshield her from all wrong."[3]

9. The cost of salvation smites all indifference to religion. If Christ was willing to die that we might be saved, what ought not we to do?

In the Royal Gallery of Munich is an impressive picture of the bleeding, thorn-crowned Sufferer. The rope which binds the hands of the Divine Victim is represented as depending over the Latin inscription, —

> "Ego, pro te, hæc passus sum:
> Tu vero quid fecisti pro me?"
>
> "I have borne these things for thee;
> What hast thou done for me?"

[1] George A. Gordon, D. D., in *Lowell Lectures of 1900.*

[2] *Modern Painters*, vol. v., "The Hesperid Æglé."

[3] James Russell Lowell.

In Mrs. Browning's poem *The Seraphim*, Ador "The Strong," and Zerah "The Bright One," with multitudes of angels, are watching above the cross. They see the scenes at which we have been gazing while studying this chapter, and with deeper understanding than ours. One of them, seeing such a wonderful expression of love for man, is troubled by the thought that men will now have more reason to love God than even the angels have. The other remonstrates, saying, "Do we love not?" "Yea, but not as man shall," he answered.

> "Oh! not with this blood on us — and this face,
> Still, haply, pale with sorrow that it bore
> In our behalf, and tender evermore
> With nature all our own, upon us gazing —
> Nor yet with these forgiving hands upraising
> Their unreproachful wounds, alone to bless!
> Alas, Creator! shall we love thee less
> Than mortals shall?"

CHAPTER 28.

SECTION XXV. — THE RESURRECTION.

1. THE RESURRECTION OF JESUS, vers. 1–8.
2. THE ELEVEN APPEARANCES, vers. 9–15.
3. THE GREAT COMMISSION, vers. 16–20.
4. THE ASCENSION.
5. THE EVER-LIVING SAVIOUR, ver. 20.

I. THE RESURRECTION OF JESUS, vers. 1–8.

THREE DAYS IN THE TOMB. Jesus, as we have seen, was buried between four and six o'clock (probably nearer four) on Friday afternoon, April 7, and rose early on Sunday morning, April 9, so that he was in the tomb part of three days.

BY JEWISH RECKONING.

4–6 P. M., Friday = 2 hours.
6–6 P. M., Saturday = 24 hours.
6. P. M.–4 or 5 A. M., Sunday = 10 or 11 hours.

BY COMMON RECKONING.

4 P. M.–12 midnight, Friday = 8 hours.
12–12 midnight, Saturday = 24 hours.
12 midnight–4 or 5 A. M., Sunday = 4 or 5 hours.

The Gospels say sometimes that Jesus would rise "on the third day," and sometimes "after three days," Matthew using both terms (compare Matt. 12 : 40 with 16 : 21), showing that the terms are interchangeable. Each part of a day was reckoned as a day, just as in computing the reigns of the Jewish kings each part of a year is reckoned as a year. Thus a reign extending from December, 1899, through 1900 into January, 1901, would be counted as three years, although only thirteen or fourteen months. It is so in the Old Testament, in the Talmud, in Josephus, and in the Assyrian tablets. Days were counted in the same way.

If any one feels any hesitancy on this point he has only to adopt the theory, which several volumes have been written to prove, that Jesus was crucified on Thursday instead of Friday, in which case Jesus would have been in the tomb three complete days and nights.

GUARDS AGAINST ALL POSSIBILITY OF MISTAKE. Every possible precaution was taken without thought of its importance to Christianity, but by the overruling providence of God, to prevent any mistake or doubt as to the reality of the death of Christ, and of his resurrection, for there could be no real resurrection unless there was real death. There must be no question, no doubt, no chance for imagining that Jesus was only in a trance or hypnotic state, from which he might be awakened. There must be no opportunity for the truth of the rulers' story that the disciples stole his body away.

1. The soldiers pierced his body with a spear, and blood and water flowed from the wound, — a proof of death (John 19 : 34, 35).

2. The centurion, who was accustomed to executions, was convinced that he was dead, and so reported to Pilate. "Even Strauss is constrained to say, 'The whole countryside knew he was dead.'"

3. The tomb in which he was buried was a new one, in which no one had ever been buried, and so there could be no doubt as to the identity of the body of Christ.

4. At the request of the chief priests, the stone against the door of the sepulchre was sealed, and a Roman guard placed around the tomb, so that no one could take away the body and then pretend that Jesus had risen (ch. 27 : 62–66).

5. His friends believed he was dead, and wrapped him in spices for burial. They had no expectation of his rising in the way he did. They expected not his coming back to them in the body, but, if at all, "his second coming in glory into his kingdom." They were so certain of his

1 In the Now [t] end of late on the sabbath' day, as it began to dawn toward the first *day* of the week, came Mā′rў Măg-dą-lē′nĕ and [u] the other Mā′rў to see the sepulchre.

2 And' behold, there was a great earthquake; for [v] the an angel of the Lord descended from heaven, and came and rolled back away the stone, from the door, and sat upon it.

3 [w] His countenance appearance was like as lightning, and his [x] raiment white as snow:

4 And and for fear of him the keepers watchers did shake, quake, and [y] became as dead men. men.

5 And the angel answered and said unto the women, Fear not ye: for I know that ye seek Jē′şus, which was hath been crucified.

t For vers. 1–8, see Mark 16. 1–8 & Luke 24. 1–10 & John 20. 1. *u* ch. 27. 56, 61. *v* Cp. John 20. 12. *w* Dan. 10. 6. *x* Cp. Dan. 7. 9 & Mark 9. 3 & John 20. 12 & Acts 1. 10. *y* Cp. Rev. 1. 17.

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death that it was very hard to convince them even when they saw him alive.

6. The story of the guards, that the disciples came by night and stole the body away while they slept (vers. 11–14), was a falsehood paid for by the Jewish rulers, and was stupid, contradictory, and absurd.

1. **In the end of the sabbath**, Saturday, the Jewish sabbath, on which *they rested*, as it began to dawn toward the first day of the week, Sunday, **came Mary Magdalene**, *i. e.*, Mary from Magdala, on the Sea of Galilee, whom Jesus had redeemed from the terrible affliction allied to insanity, — the being possessed by seven demons (Luke 8 : 2).

Her debt of gratitude was infinite. There is at Dresden a painting, "of the school of Titian," which represents her as a woman of middle age, once very beautiful, with deep lines of suffering in her face, but over it all a look of gentleness, peace, and unutterable gratitude.[1] **And the other Mary.** The mother of James the less and Joses (27 : 56), together with Salome, the mother of John, Joanna, the wife of Chuza, and other women (Luke). They were bringing the spices they had prepared for embalming the body of Jesus. They probably started from their different homes in the city, to meet at the tomb by dawn.[2]

Note the devotion of these women who went to the sepulchre before even the best of the apostles.

> "Not she with traitorous kiss her Master stung;
> Not she denied him with unfaithful tongue;
> She when apostles fled could dangers brave,
> Last at his cross and earliest at his grave."[3]

2. **And, behold, there was a great earthquake**, early in the morning, some time before their arrival at the tomb. **For the angel** (an angel) **of the Lord descended from heaven.** A divine messenger, to overawe the guards, and show that Jesus rose, and was not taken from the tomb by human power. **Rolled back the stone from the door, and sat upon it.** As a guard waiting to give the needed information to the disciples.

3. **His countenance** (his appearance) **was like lightning**, in vivid and intense brightness. **And his raiment white as snow.** This was heavenly apparel. Christ at his transfiguration had his face shining as the sun, and his raiment white and glistening. This dazzling whiteness was the visible expression of his heavenly nature and origin.

4. **And for fear of him the keepers**, that is, the Roman guard, **became as dead men.** Swooned into unconsciousness through fright, and perhaps by the direct power of the angel.

5. It seems that Mary Magdalene first reached the tomb, and seeing the stone rolled from the door, hastened to tell the news to Peter. The others then came, and entering into the tomb, "found not the body of the Lord Jesus" (Luke).

> "With myrrh and with aloes,
> We balmed and we bathed him,
> Loyally, lovingly,
> Tenderly swathed him:
>
> "With cerecloth and band
> For the grave we arrayed him;
> But oh, he is gone
> From the place where we laid him."[4]

They were perplexed, when suddenly they saw the two angels sitting on the stone beside the inner door. **And the angel**, one of the two whom Mark mentions, **answered** the perplexity

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[1] Prof. Broadus.

[2] See Margaret J. Preston's "The Myrrh-Bearers."

> "Three women crept at break of day,
> Agrope along the shadowy way
> Where Joseph's tomb and garden lay."

[3] Mrs. E. B. Browning.

[4] Goethe, *Faust*.

6 He is not here: for he is risen, even [z] as he said. Come, see the place where the Lord lay.

7 And go quickly, and tell his disciples, that he He is risen from the dead; and, behold, lo, [a] he goeth before you into Gal'i-lee; there shall ye see him: lo, I have told you.

8 And they departed quickly from the sepulchre tomb [b] with fear and great joy; and did run ran to bring his disciples word.

z ch. 27. 63. a vers. 10, 16. ch. 26. 32. b Cp. Ps. 2. 11.

and fear of the women. **Fear not ye.** *Ye* is emphatic in the original. The keepers and the enemies of Jesus had reason to fear, but not these disciples. They had infinitely more reason to rejoice than to fear. **For I know.** He understood them, and had come to help them. He knew that love to the Crucified One had brought them to the tomb.

6. **He is not here,** in the tomb, **for he is risen as he said.** He had assured them several times that he would rise again after his death. **Come, see the place,** so that they may be fully convinced that he had risen.

7. **And go quickly, and tell his disciples,** that their sorrows may end, their doubts be removed, their night be turned into day. It was fitting that the resurrection should occur at the dawning of the day. It was the dawning of the world's day of redemption. Mark adds "and Peter." For he would be the saddest of all. This message would be a drop of joy in his cup then, as showing Christ's forgiveness. It would be a joy that he might have opportunity to ask pardon and show his repentance. No longer need it be true that the last word he ever spoke in the presence of his Lord was a denial that he knew him, accompanied by curses. **And, behold, he goeth before you into Galilee; there shall ye see him.** So Jesus himself had promised them before he died (ch. 26:32). He did indeed show himself before they went to Galilee, but the great manifestation to over five hundred at once who must have gathered for that purpose on account of the message, the great proof that he was living in his own human body, by eating with the disciples, and the great commission to evangelize the world, all were in Galilee. "The meaning may possibly be that they were expected to go into Galilee (this was spoken to the apostles only at the last supper), but that *he was to lead the way for them;* they were to remain at Jerusalem until he should give them notice to go into Galilee; and when he should give this notice, they would find him there before their arrival."[1] **Lo, I have told you.** I, the angel, announce this promise very clearly and unmistakably.

8. **And they departed . . . with fear and great joy.** "*Fear* at what they had seen, *joy* at what they had heard; and both mingled because the latter seemed too good to be true."[2] This commingling of very different feelings is a common experience. **And did run.** In obedience to the angel they used all possible haste.

With what Body did Jesus rise? It is of the utmost importance that we remember that the body Jesus rose with was the very same body which died on the cross. There is no possible way to prove that Jesus rose from the dead if the body was not the same after the resurrection that it was before he was buried.

1. To rise with a body changed, as Paul says our resurrection bodies are changed from our natural bodies, would be to vitiate the proof of his resurrection on which our faith and hope depend.

2. Jesus takes special pains to show his disciples that he is the same. He declares that he is flesh and bones; he bids Thomas put his hands in the prints of the nails and in the wound made by the spear; he eats before them the same kind of food he ate before he died. Paul tells us that the resurrection body is a spiritual, not a natural body, and made after Christ's glorious body, of which we have hints in the Transfiguration and in the description of his appearance in Rev. 1:13–16.

3. The fact that Jesus seemed to have peculiar power over his body, entered rooms apparently with closed doors, and appeared occasionally and for brief seasons only, is no proof that his body was changed; for Jesus gave hints of such power before his crucifixion, in escaping crowds and walking on the sea.

4. Jesus' body was doubtless changed at the ascension into a spiritual body. It was not till that change that we have in the resurrection of Christ a type of the change to be made in our bodies by the resurrection. Then took place what Paul declares is to take place on the resurrection day in those who are alive. We shall be changed in a moment; in the twinkling of an eye.

5. The resurrection body of Jesus that corresponds to our resurrection bodies is shown in the

[1] President Woolsey.

[2] Prof. Schaff.

9 ¶ And [as they went to tell his disciples,] behold, Jē'sus [c] met them, saying, All hail. And they came and [d held him by the feet, took hold of his] feet, and [c] worshipped him.

10 Then [said] saith Jē'sus unto them, [Be not afraid: Fear not:] [f] go tell [g] my brethren that they [go depart] into Găl'ĭ-lee, and there shall they see me.

c Cp. Mark 16. 9 & John 20. 14. *d* 2 Kin. 4. 27. *e* ver. 17. Luke 24. 52. See ch. 8. 2. *f* See John 20. 18. *g* John 20. 17. Cp. Ps. 22. 22 & Rom. 8. 29 & Heb. 2. 11, 12, 17.

first chapter of Revelation, in his appearance to Paul, and in the Transfiguration.

9. The order of events seems to have been this: Mary Magdalene, after notifying Peter and the apostles, returned to the sepulchre, which she reached after the others had left, and Jesus appeared to her near the tomb. This was his first appearance, after his resurrection (John). Then **as they went to tell his disciples**, by some other route than Mary Magdalene took, **behold, Jesus met them**, his second appearance, and made himself known by saying, **All hail**, χαίρετε, rejoice, "the ordinary Greek form of salutation." The English "all hail" is shortened from "all health." **Held him by the feet.** Clasped his feet, in reverent, affectionate joy, to make sure that it was indeed their Lord, and to express their gladness. **And worshipped him**, by falling on the knees and touching the ground with the forehead after the Oriental fashion, an expression of profound reverence.

10. **Go tell my brethren that they go into Galilee.** The same message which the angels had given them in the sepulchre (see on ver. 7).[1]

II. OUR LORD'S APPEARANCES AFTER HIS RESURRECTION.

Eleven Times, in Different Places, during Forty Years.

Order.	Time.	To whom.	Where.	Record.
1	Sunday, April 9. Early in the morning	To Mary Magdalene	Near the sepulchre at Jerusalem	Mark 16 : 9 John 20 : 11–18
2	Sunday morning	To the women returning from the sepulchre	Near Jerusalem	Matt. 28 : 9, 10
3	Sunday	To Simon Peter alone	Near Jerusalem	Luke 24 : 34
4	Sunday afternoon	To two disciples going to Emmaus	Between Jerusalem and Emmaus, and at Emmaus	Luke 24 : 13–31
5	Sunday evening	To the apostles, excepting Thomas	Jerusalem	John 20 : 19–25
6	Sunday evening, April 16	To the apostles, Thomas being present	Jerusalem	John 20 : 26–29
7	Last of April or first of May	To seven disciples fishing	Sea of Galilee	John 21 : 1–13
8	Last of April or first of May	To the eleven disciples on a mountain	Galilee	Matt. 28 : 16–20
9	Last of April or first of May	To above five hundred brethren at once	Galilee	1 Cor. 15 : 6
10	May	To James only	Jerusalem, probably	1 Cor. 15 : 7
11	Thursday, May 18	To all the apostles, at his ascension	Mount of Olives, near Bethany	Luke 24 : 50, 51 Acts 1 : 6–12

Why Jesus revealed Himself in this Way. Why was not Jesus seen continually, instead of only in a few scattered instances?

1. It would have made it much more difficult for the disciples, and especially for those less acquainted with the facts, to believe in the reality

[1] Westcott's *Gospel of the Resurrection;* Milligan's *Resurrection of Our Lord;* Dr. George D. Boardman's *Epiphanies of the Risen Lord;* C. R. Morison's *Proofs of the Resurrection from a Lawyer's Standpoint.*

11 ¶ Now when while they were going, behold, some of the *h* watch guard came into the city, and shewed told unto the chief priests all the things that were done come to pass.

12 And when they were assembled with the elders, and had taken counsel, they gave large money unto the soldiers,

13 Saying, saying, Say ye, *i* His disciples came by night, and stole him away away while we slept.

14 And if this come to *j* the governor's ears, we will *k* persuade him, and secure rid you of care.

h ch. 27. 65, 66. *i* Cp. ch. 27. 64. *j* ch. 27. 2. *k* See Acts 12. 20 (Gk.).

of the resurrection. The rulers would think the story they put in the mouths of the soldier guard might be true.

2. This period was a transition state, a connecting link between the three years of personal association and acquaintance with Jesus in his human presence and his spiritual presence, as an unseen divine Saviour and glorious King, abiding forever with his people. Thus Dr. Robert Tuck says, "The forty days in the resurrection body was Christ's great effort to help the disciples to realize that he was a *spiritual* Messiah, a *spiritual* Saviour." To accomplish this, it was needful (*a*) that he should appear often enough to give perfect proof that he was alive and the same Jesus they had known before. (*b*) That they should be trained to a realization of his divine nature and spiritual presence. (*c*) That by the ascension there should be an unbroken connection between the visible and the invisible manifestations.

THE STORY OF THE WATCH. 11. **When they were going.** While the women were hastening to announce the gospel of the resurrection to the disciples, the soldiers were going to report it to the Pharisees; the one to publish it for the world's redemption, the other to conceal and counteract it. Satan was almost as quick to silence the Gospel as the disciples to proclaim it. **Some of the watch.** The guard set by Pilate at the request of the chief priests, to watch the sepulchre, lest the disciples should steal his body, and say he was risen (ch. 27: 62-66). **Shewed unto the chief priests,** under whose charge they were. The beloved of Jesus heard the glorious news from angels, but the enemies from rough Roman soldiers. **All the things that were done.** They told the simple truth as the best possible excuse for their seeming negligence. "How was it to be expected that they should hold out against heaven, or contend with earthquakes and angels?"[1]

12. **When they were assembled with the elders.** "The language does not imply a formal meeting of the Sanhedrim, but rather a secret meeting of the special enemies of Christ."[2] **They gave large money,** an abundant supply. The report the soldiers made was so dangerous to their own lives, that no small sum could induce them to criminate themselves; but the entire results of all their efforts to destroy Jesus seemed to depend upon it.

13. **Say ye, His disciples came by night, and stole him away while we slept.** (1) The absurdity and stupidity of this statement is apparent on the face of it. For if the guard were asleep, how could they know that the disciples stole him away. If their testimony is worth anything, it is that while they were asleep they saw men stealing the body, and knew enough to recognize them as the disciples of Jesus. (2) The disciples could not have stolen the body away if they would, with the soldiers placed on watch especially to prevent it. Even the noise of rolling away the stone would have awakened a sleepy guard. (3) The disciples had no motive for stealing the body. They did not expect a resurrection. They did not know its importance. What could they have done with the body to escape detection?

NOTE. (1) It was impossible for these enemies to deny that Christ had by some means left the grave. (2) It was impossible for them to give any other explanation than that which they now invented, — that his disciples stole the body. (3) It was impossible for this, the only explanation they could give, to be credited.

14. **And if this come to the governor's ears,** who probably soon returned to his capital at Cæsarea. Moreover, the report would be made almost entirely to Jews. **We will persuade him,** by bribes. Euripides says, "They say that gifts *persuade* even gods." Pilate to a certain extent was subject to their influence lest they report some of his evil deeds to the emperor at Rome. **And secure you,** from the penalty of sleeping on guard, which was death (ὑμᾶς ἀμερίμνους ποιήσομεν), "lit., *make you without care.* The word 'secure,' however, is etymologically a correct rendering. It is from the Latin *se* = *sine*, *without*, and *cura*, *care*. It has passed into the popular meaning to

[1] Morison.

[2] Lyman Abbott.

15 So they took the money, and did as they were taught: and this saying is commonly reported was spread abroad among the Jews, *and continueth* [l] until this day.

l ch. 27. 8.

make safe. Compare 1 Cor. vii. 32. 'I would have you to be *free from cares*' (R. V.)." [1]

15. **And this saying,** the story made up by the soldiers. **Until this day.** That is, when the Gospel was written, thirty to thirty-nine years after the resurrection.

PROOFS OF THE RESURRECTION. "The resurrection of Jesus Christ is the best attested fact in history." [2]

1. The proofs were so complete as to convince the apostles of it so thoroughly that they staked their lives, their happiness, their all, upon it, with no motive for believing it if false. They believed it because they were compelled by the evidence to believe it. It was against their worldly interests to accept the truth. "To claim that the apostles did not believe what they preached is to claim that without motive, and against every motive, and 'amidst sufferings the most grievous to flesh and blood, they persevered in a conspiracy to cheat the world into piety, honesty, and benevolence.' Conscience and common sense revolt against such a theory." [3]

2. There were a large number of witnesses, well qualified, extending over a considerable time, with every opportunity to know the facts under a great variety of circumstances. And they saw, and touched the very same identical body which was crucified and buried. They could not be deceived. Nor can any one conceive how Jesus could have given his disciples better proof than he did of his resurrection.

3. By their declaration of the fact they induced thousands of the very enemies of Christ to believe in it, and that close to the time and near the very spot on which it occurred. Thus were added a multitude of witnesses.

4. "A singular and significant testimony to the truth of the resurrection is afforded by the change in the Sabbath day. It was changed, not by any express command in the New Testament, but by the almost universal consent of the church, which could not endure to observe as a day of joy and gladness that on which Christ lay in the tomb, nor forbear to mark as a weekly festival that on which he arose." [2]

5. The very existence of the Christian church is a proof of the resurrection of Jesus. "Faith in mere visions or phantoms may produce phantoms, but not such a phenomenon as the Christian church, the greatest fact and the mightiest institution in the history of the world." [4]

6. Only the fact of the resurrection can account for the marvellous change in the spirit and character of the apostles. The resurrection completely transformed them; inspired them with a new conception of Christ's kingdom as for all people, with a new courage to suffer for the sake of their risen Lord and his kingdom. Neither fraud nor fiction is competent to account for the moral contrast.

7. The works Christ has been doing ever since in the world are a proof that he who does them is a risen, living Saviour, — the conversion of Paul, the victory over the Roman empire, the ever-increasing progress of Christianity, the marvellous works of conversion and revival, the fruits of the Spirit. A dead Christ could not accomplish such results.

8. The resurrection fits into the life of Christ, the Saviour, as an essential part. His life and the whole plan of salvation would be incomplete without it.

LESSONS FROM THE RESURRECTION OF JESUS.

1. Jesus appeared first to those who loved most; whose love made them go first and earliest to the places where he had been, when Love overshadowed Faith and Hope. To Love he can best manifest himself. The loving heart can receive and recognize him, while yet the reason is dull and the intellect blind.

2. The resurrection of Jesus is the crowning proof that he is the Son of God. If he could not conquer death, and come back from heaven, he could not prove that at the first he came from heaven. Canon Liddon says, "The resurrection of Christ is the certificate of our Lord's mission from heaven, to which he himself pointed as a warrant of his claims."

3. It proves that we have a living Saviour, sitting on the right hand of God (Rom. 8: 34; Col. 3: 1), seated with the Father in his throne (Rev. 3: 21; 22: 1). We have a picture of his glory in Heb. 1: 2–4, and in Rev. 1: 10–18. We do not, as has been falsely charged, worship a dead Christ, but a living Christ. Having shown his power to conquer Death, the great enemy, we know he has power to conquer all our enemies. He is the great, living Leader, Inspirer, and Protector of his people, who will make his kingdom to triumph over all evil. "The whole alphabet of human hope" is in the resurrection of Jesus.

[1] Prof. M. R. Vincent, *Word Studies.*
[2] Lyman Abbott.
[3] Charles R. Morison, *Christ's Resurrection from a Lawyer's Standpoint.*
[4] President Woolsey.

16 ¶ Then / But the eleven disciples [m] went away into Găl'ĭ-lee, into a / unto the mountain where Jē'sus had appointed them.

17 And when they saw him, they [n] worshipped him: / him; but some doubted.

18 And Jē'sus came to them and spake unto them, saying, [o] All power is / authority hath been given unto me [p] in heaven and in / on earth.

m ver. 7. *n* ver. 9. *o* ch. 11. 27. Dan. 7. 13, 14. John 3. 35 & 13. 3 & 17. 2. Acts 2. 36. Rom. 14. 9. 1 Cor. 15. 27. Eph. 1. 10, 20–22. Phil. 2. 9, 10. Col. 2. 10. Heb. 1. 2 & 2. 8. 1 Pet. 3. 22. Rev. 17. 14, *al.* Cp. ch. 9. 6 & John 5. 27. *p* Cp. ch. 6. 10 & Luke 2. 14.

4. It is the proof of immortal life beyond the grave; that death does not end all, but the soul lives after the body dies.[1] We can be sure from his testimony and his resurrection that we are not

> "Like ships that sailed from sunny isles,
> But never came to shore."

"Theodore Monod said he would like the epitaph on his tombstone to be, Here endeth the First Lesson." Thus, the resurrection gives largeness and broadness to life, everything we are and do having an influence and a meaning beyond the grave.

5. We find in the resurrection of Jesus, including the whole experience, from the rising from the tomb to the ascension, an assurance and illustration of our resurrection.[2] The body with which Christ rose was not like our resurrection bodies, which are to be like his glorious body. (Phil. 3: 21; 1 Cor. 15: 44–50). The resurrection body is not made of flesh and bones, but is a spiritual body growing out of that body as a plant grows out of a seed. The best of all possible illustrations of the resurrection is that which Paul gives of a seed buried in the ground springing up into a plant. The little seed becomes a plant radiant with blossoms; the acorn becomes a spreading oak, with new powers and glories inconceivable in the seed. So Spurgeon says, "We put into the ground a bulb, and it rises a golden lily. We drop into the mould a seed, and it comes forth an exquisite flower, resplendent with brilliant colors; these are the same that we put into the earth, the same identically, but oh, how different!"

6. The resurrection of Christ, as well as the resurrection of his people, are used by Paul as a symbol and type of our spiritual resurrection from the death of sin into the newness of the life on earth. See Rom. 6: 4, 5.

III. THE GREAT COMMISSION, vers. 16–20.

16. **The eleven disciples went away**, from Jerusalem, probably not all in a body, for seven appear together by the Sea of Galilee (John); but they all gathered together in **Galilee**, into a, "unto the," **mountain where Jesus had appointed them**, probably at some of his appearances to them in the city.

It is not improbable that the "five hundred at once," mentioned by St. Paul in 1 Cor. 15: 6, met at this same time, or very near it. "This supposition (1) accounts for the retired place and formal appointment (the apostles alone he had met several times without any such formal announcement). (2) It also helps to explain why this meeting was to be in Galilee, both because Galilee contained a larger number of pronounced and trustworthy disciples of Jesus than Judea or Perea, and because it was farther from the watchful jealousy of the rulers at Jerusalem. (3) This accounts also for the stress laid at the outset on going to Galilee and there seeing him; *there* was to be the great meeting and the giving of the Great Commission." [3]

17. **And when they saw him**, as he appeared to them according to his promise, **they worshipped him**, fell prostrate at his feet in reverence and awe. **But some doubted.** Probably not of the Eleven, but of the five hundred. The Eleven had before this been cured of their doubts. The doubts of the early church could be overcome only by the most invincible proofs. Never were men less credulous; and the fact that they were finally obliged to yield to the many infallible proofs of the risen Christ is strong evidence that he did actually rise from the dead.

18. **All power is given unto me.** The word rendered "power," ἐξουσία, means both power and authority. The meanings given in Professor

[1] Note the contrast with the drama of *Alcestis*, by Euripides, where is a vivid picture of Hercules, "half god, half man, encountering Thanatos (Death) in personal conflict, and overcoming him at the tomb, and then restoring to life and light the pure, devoted, self-sacrificing Alcestis."

[2] See the story of King Edwin and Paulinus, a poem concerning the entrance of the Gospel into Northumbria; Joseph Cook's *Monday Lectures*, "Biology;" Dr. Sears' *Foregleams and Foreshadows;* Whately's *Future State.* Discussions of immortality from various standpoints, as, Plato's *Phædo;* Cicero's *De Senectute;* Shakespeare's *Hamlet*, Hamlet's soliloquy in the castle of Elsinore; and *Measure for Measure*, Claudio's address to his sister Isabella; Wordsworth's *Poems*, "Intimations."

[3] Prof. Broadus.

19 ¶ [q] Go ye therefore, and [r] make disciples of [s] all the nations, [q] baptizing them [t] into [u] the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Hō'lȳ Ghōst:

q Mark 16. 15, 16. *r* ch. 13. 52. *s* Luke 24. 47. Cp. ch. 24. 14 & Mark 11. 17 & Rom. 1. 5. *t* See Acts 8. 16. *u* Cp. 2 Cor. 13. 14.

Thayer's new *Greek-English Lexicon* are: (1) "Power of choice, . . . leave, or permission." (2) "Physical and mental power; the ability or strength with which one is endued, and which he either possesses or exercises." (3) "The power of authority (influence) and right." (4) "The power of government (generally translated authority)." All these kinds of power and authority Jesus possessed, and it required them all to carry on his work as the Messiah, subduing the world to himself as King of kings. *Is given unto me.* The power he possessed; the authority was given him. Of the divine works, that of subduing the world to righteousness and God was committed unto the Son; and all the power and authority needful for accomplishing this work was his. **In heaven.** (1) All the power of God himself is pledged, — the power of love, the power of life, the power of control, the power to pardon, the power to plant new graces in the heart, the power of comfort and aid in every need, in every place, the power of omnipresence and of omniscience. (2) The services of subordinate intelligences in heaven are guaranteed. Angels are ministering spirits, and as such they frequently appear in the Old Testament and in the New. (3) The power of the Holy Spirit to convince the world of sin, to convert the soul, to guide into all truth, to fill with heavenly influences, to direct the church. (4) Power over all spiritual influences and motives. He can control every influence that can bear upon the salvation of men.

And in earth. (1) Over his disciples, to be their Teacher and their Master, the one Head of the church. (2) Over the world, to guide all nations, to direct the course of history, to make even the enemies of his religion aid in its extension. Every movement, every design of man, every worldly force, is under his control. (3) He has the power on earth over all the motives that can move men toward God, — love, duty, fear, hope. (4) He has authority over property. The silver and the gold are his. (5) He has power over nature and its laws, so that he can defend and aid his children. (6) He has power over all the inventions of men, so that commerce shall carry his gospel, telegraphs transmit his word, and cannon batter down barriers to his work. (7) He has power over all adverse influences, devils, wicked men, wrong ideas.

It is because of this power and authority that Jesus could give the commission, which follows, to his disciples, and they could be willing to undertake it. "On the cross he was proclaimed King of the Jews; but when John saw him, in his apocalyptic vision, 'on his head were many crowns,' and on his vesture and on his thigh he had a name written, KING OF KINGS, AND LORD OF LORDS."

19. **Gō ye therefore.** Because I have all power and authority, I have a right to say to you, *Go.* I can make your going successful; therefore Go, be aggressive. Do not wait for the people to come to you, but go to them. The disciples literally obeyed this command and went everywhere preaching the Gospel.

And teach. R. V., "make disciples of." *Teach,* μαθητεύσατε (from μαθητής, *a disciple, a learner, a pupil*) *make disciples of, cause to be learners and pupils of,* is a different word from *teach* in the next verse, διδάσκοντες, *to hold discourse with others in order to instruct them, to explain, to expound, to impart instruction, to instil doctrine.* "The verb 'disciple' is found once in Shakespeare (*All's Well,* Act I., scene 2), and once in Spenser (*Faerie Queene,* chap. 1 : 14)." To disciple a person to Christ is to lead them to become followers of his example, learners in his school, obedient to his precepts, filled with his spirit, born from above with a new heart and a new life, like his.

All nations. Not merely the Jews, but all peoples, races, kindreds, and tongues, civilized and savage, Greek and barbarian, white and black, bond and free. And this is what the disciples did. Within one generation they preached to every nation in the known world.

Baptizing them. With water, and Jesus himself will baptize them with the Holy Spirit. **In** (rather "into") **the name,** the essential nature, the person, in which is summed up all his characteristics and attributes. "Baptizing *into* the name has a twofold meaning: (1) *unto* denoting *object* or *purpose* (as one devoted to him, belonging to him, coming into relations to him); and (2) *into,* into fellowship, 'into a spiritual and mystical union.'" "When one is baptized into the name of the Trinity, he professes to acknowledge and appropriate God in all that he is and in all that he does for man. He recognizes and depends upon God the Father as his Creator and Preserver; receives Jesus Christ as his only Mediator and Redeemer, and his pattern of life; and confesses the Holy Spirit as his Sanctifier and Comforter."[1] By baptism, those who were made disciples made a public profession of their faith

[1] Prof. M. R. Vincent.

and allegiance. This is the duty of all Christians. It is both commanded and necessary; commanded because necessary. It confirms their faith, it separates them from the world, it binds them together in a church, it keeps them from falling away. Like Cortez, it burns the ships by which a return could be made. It makes others know where they stand. It is an oath of allegiance. It recognizes the new citizenship.

Of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost. The singular is used, — *name*, not *names*, — pointing to the Unity in Trinity. "There is thus a reference to the different parts which the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit take in the work of salvation, and to the unity of the Godhead, the fountain of all blessing."[1] "To this corresponds our threefold relation and obligation to God, as created by the Father, as redeemed by the Son, as sanctified by the Spirit."[2]

THE MISSIONARY WORK OF THE CHURCH. 1. The Gospel is adapted to all peoples of all kinds, as is abundantly proved by its success among them. Nothing else has had the saving power of the Gospel. We have seen specimens of what the Gospel can do for many people. The city of God lies foursquare, and has gates on every side.

2. Christianity brings to each nation the new life, the new love, the new motives, which every one needs.

3. It is the command of Christ that we preach the Gospel to all nations. And even if we could not see results, yet it would be our duty to obey. The church cannot be obedient and let one nation be without the Gospel. The duty is obligatory, not on ministers and missionaries alone, but upon the whole church. This commission was given, not to the apostles only, but to the whole body of disciples.

4. It is the very nature of living Christianity to want to spread the news of salvation. Love to Christ and love to man both compel it. "The very soul of our religion is missionary, progressive, world-embracing; it would cease to exist if it ceased to be missionary, if it disregarded the parting words of its Founder, 'Go ye, therefore, and teach all nations,' etc. The spirit of truth is the life-spring of all religion; and where it exists, it must manifest itself, it must plead, it must persuade, it must convince and convert. There may be times when silence is gold, and speech silver; but there are times also when silence is death, and speech is life, — the very life of Pentecost. Look at the religions in which the missionary spirit has been at work, and compare them with those in which any attempt to convince others by argument, to save souls, to bear witness to the truth, is treated with pity or scorn. *The former are alive; the latter are dying or dead.*"[3]

5. This command includes home missions as well as foreign; our own neighborhood as well as more distant places. But missionary effort must not be confined to the home field. Every nation needs the Gospel as much as ours needs it. The same spirit impels to all forms of effort to reach men. Every church should know thoroughly its own field. But the wider outlook and interest increases the true spirit. Nothing has done more for the churches at home than a great and abiding interest in the foreign work. The grandeur of this work exalts the individual Christians who give and labor.

6. It is a great privilege to be engaged in the missionary work of the church. The work is so arranged that every one, even the poorest, can have some part in it. The work is like a stock company, and every person can have some of the shares.

Men gain spiritual life by imparting it. They gain clearer views of truth by teaching others. They grow richer in all that is best in life by giving freely of the money God gives them.

The fountain that gives what it receives is fresh and clear and beautiful. The bog that receives and does not give is malarious, foul, reptile-haunted. "Love exhausts not itself by loving, but after all its outgoings upon others, abides itself far richer than it would have done but for the multiplying which there ever is in a true dispensing."[4]

A city grows rich by receiving and giving forth. It is a focus of commerce. A desert neither receives nor gives, and it always remains barren and poor. Every heart that receives and gives forth grows rich in holiness and love and everything that belongs to its commerce.

7. This is the only way the church will keep pure. Nothing without this can keep the doctrine or life pure; organizations, creeds, persecutions, — all have failed. But any church which seeks to save souls will keep pure, because it cannot do its work without the great main doctrines of Christianity.

8. The progress of the church through missions is one of the most hopeful signs of the times. The era of missions has been its era of greatest advancement at home.[5]

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[1] G. W. Clark, D. D.
[2] *Revision Com.*
[3] Max Müller.
[4] Trench.
[5] Charts of the progress of Christianity can be found in Dorchester's *Religious Progress* and in Arthur Pierson's *Acts of the Holy Spirit. Christian Missions and Social Progress*, by James S. Dennis, 2 vols., stands first in the science of missions. See, also, *The New Acts of the Apostles*, by A. T. Pierson.

20 Teaching teaching them to *r* observe all things whatsoever I have *w* commanded you: and lo, *x* I am with you alway, even unto *y* the end of the world. Amen.

r John 14. 15. *w* Cp. Acts 1. 2. *x* Cp. ch. 1. 23 & 18. 20 & John 12. 26 & 14. 3 & 17. 24 & Acts 18. 10. *y* See ch. 13. 39.

20. **Teaching them**, see on ver. 19. Instructing them as a teacher instructs his pupils, by word, by example, by his whole personality.

"OBSERVE the order of the Lord's injunctions: first, announce the Glad Tidings; secondly, make disciples; thirdly, baptize them; fourthly, teach them. First, the Gospels; then the Epistles. First, the Glad Tidings; then the Articles of Faith."[1] Conversion is only the beginning of the Christian life and the Christian work. Then begins the great work of teaching and training in all the doctrines of Christ, and the varied duties of life. **To observe**; τηρεῖν, *to guard* as a precious treasure, *to keep watch over* lest any of Jesus' commandments should escape notice. It is more than *to do*. **All things whatsoever I have commanded you**, both by his direct teaching when alive, and by his Holy Spirit whom he promised to send to bring all things to their remembrance, and to guide them in the unfolding and application of his teachings (John 14: 26).

Lo, I am with you alway. Note, it is *I am*, not *I will be*. Jesus, with his love, with his power, with his wisdom, with his willingness to help; Jesus the Saviour, the Guide, the Inspirer, the King, the Teacher; Jesus the Omniscient, the Omnipresent, the Omnipotent, is with us everywhere, all the days. *Alway*, literally, *all the days*. It is a daily presence which is promised, not a fitful coming and going, but an abiding presence (John 15 : 4); a presence, too, in all days, and never, even in the darkest, to be forgotten. **Unto the end of the world.** Literally, *the consummation of the age*, the end of the gospel dispensation, when the kingdom shall have fully come.

IV. THE ASCENSION.

WHEN.	TO WHOM.	WHERE.	RECORD.
Thursday, May 18.	In the presence of the eleven apostles.	From the Mount of Olives near Bethany.	Luke 24 : 50, 51. Acts 1 : 9–11.

V. THE EVER-LIVING SAVIOUR,

His return through the Holy Spirit.	Pentecost, May 28, A. D. 30. Jerusalem. Upper room. Beginning of the new dispensation.
His work in heaven.	A living Saviour. Our high priest, mediator, and intercessor.
His work on earth.	Appears in glory to Paul. A living Saviour, to convert, to comfort, to help.
His glorious nature.	Appears in glory to John. Description of Jesus in heaven. Revealer, instructor, guide.
The consummation of his kingdom.	The world redeemed. His second coming.

[1] Geo. D. Boardman, *Epiphanies*.

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HELPFUL HINTS TO TEACHERS.

By A. F. SCHAUFFLER, D. D.

I want to-day to talk to Teachers about a Bible. Not any Bible, but a particular Bible. Of course every teacher has the Bible. But I am much surprised to find how many teachers have only an ordinary Bible. In days gone by this was all that they could have. But in the last twenty-five years things have improved much. When I first began my ministry, it was possible to get what is called a "Teachers' Bible" for $11.00. The advantage of such a Bible was quickly seen by all those who were wide awake. But they were so expensive that few could purchase them.

But with the progress of years, the "Teachers' Bible" has been much improved, and the price, at the same time, has come down, so that now all teachers may own one. The particular Bible of which I speak to-day is the one which, on the whole, I think is the best for the average teacher. It is the "Oxford Edition, Long Primer 8vo, Thin." It is bound in Morocco, limp covers, silk sewed, on the best of thin paper, and with fine large type. It will last a lifetime, if properly cared for, and is easily portable. The multiplicity of helps that it contains was not dreamed of twenty-five years ago. So complete are these helps, that the teacher can take this Bible with him on his vacations, and feel that he has in reality a Library, all in one book.

I want to emphasize the value of this book, since I know it by personal experience. Of course it is a reference Bible. But in the back of the book there are helps along the following lines: —

First comes a set of plates, showing specimens of the language, writings, and versions of the Old and New Testaments. These include 52 plates that give specimens of the Hebrew, Greek, and Latin versions of the Word. Then follows a set of plates setting forth the various versions of the English Bible, beginning with Tindale's New Testament.

These are followed by illustrations of Old Testament History, and Religion in Egypt; and these in turn followed by plates of the Assyrian and Babylonian regions, as they are connected with the Word. None of the Teachers' Bibles of ten years ago had these valuable helps. They are the result of recent explorations, and are most unique.

In this one volume, too, the teacher will find a summary of the books of the Old Testament, which is most valuable. Brief outlines are given of the contents of each book, which it would cost the teacher many hours to get by himself. Twenty pages are devoted to this exposition, and the work is done in a masterly way.

In our International series of lessons, we take only a few lessons from each of the Old Testament books, and yet the teacher should know in general what the aim of the book as a whole is. This can be learned from this summary for any one book, in five minutes at the most. How this will help the teacher it is not difficult to see.

Then follow certain chronological tables, to one of which it is well to call attention. It is the table of the Kings of Israel and Judah. Many teachers do not know the difference between Israel and Judah, and would be surprised to find that these two kingdoms were separate from each other, and for the most part hostile. From this table the teacher may learn at a glance that which otherwise he would have to spend hours in hunting up here and there.

The historical sketch of the period between the close of the Old Testament and the beginning of the New Testament will be new to many a teacher, who has very vague ideas of the history of Israel during that interval. Here he will find the whole thing in a nutshell, so that in ten minutes he can read the whole of what is really essential. If then he desires it, he can go farther and look up the matters that he wishes more light about at his leisure in other publications.

In all the summaries that this Teachers' Bible contains, the marked thing is the brevity of the sections. This is good. I find that if a book be good and short, it is much more apt to be read than if it be good and long. Alas! too many books in these days are both long and not good. This cannot be said of anything between the covers of this particular Teachers' Bible.

Now follows a summary of the contents of the books of the New Testament. This, like that of the books of the Old Testament, is most useful, and will save the teacher much time. Suppose that you have only one lesson from the Epistle of Galatians, and you want to know in brief what Paul's main purpose in writing to the churches in Galatia was. All you have to do is to turn to this "summary," and look up "Galatians," and you will find all that you need. In this way you can teach much more intelligently than you otherwise can. The same thing holds true with regard to any of the books of the New Testament.

Every (or almost every) teacher knows that the Gospels are not written chronologically. If we want a truly chronological arrangement of the story of our Lord's life, we must arrange the material in what is called a "harmony" of the Gospels. The various stories told by each of the four Evangelists must be arranged so that they form one continuous whole. This is done in this Bible. You will find a "Chronology and Harmony of the Gospels" so arranged that you can find any event in the life of Jesus in its proper place. This is a most important thing if you would teach intelligently. In this table you can see at a glance what the Evangelists told in common with each other, and what was peculiar to John, or any one of them.

Were you ever bothered to find one of the Lord's miracles, or one of his parables? Well, here are two tables that will show you at one glance all of his miracles, and all of his parables, and tell you where to find them in the texts, and also how many of the Evangelists record them. How much time is saved by such tables only those know who try and hunt out these things by themselves. Many times they fail, and give it up in disgust. But this is most unfortunate, as it may be a matter of considerable importance in the teaching of some one lesson.

Suppose that you are on the subject of prayer. You want to know what prayers of God's people there are recorded in the Word, but you do not know where to look for them. Turn to page 70 in the "Helps," and you will find a list of all the recorded prayers ready to your hand.

Or if you have a meeting to lead and have for your subject the person of Christ, you may want to know the titles which are given to him in the Bible. All you have to do is to turn to page 71 and you will see them given in detail, with the passages from which they are taken. In fact on this one page there is a capital Bible Reading on this subject, which many a believer would do well to master.

The Old and the New Testaments mutually explain each other. In the New Testament we have the fulfilling of many of the prophecies of the Old Testament. It is highly important to know where these prophecies are. It is also most instructive to know how many times the New Testament writers quote from, or refer to, the Old Testament. All this may be learned from these "Helps," by turning to pages 71 to 75, where you have an exhaustive list of these passages.

The story of the Acts of the Apostles is most fascinating, but it, too, needs chronological arrangement and dovetailing with the epistles. This the ordinary teacher could not by any possibility do by himself. Here the best writers have done it all for him under the head of "Chronology of the Acts and Pauline Epistles," and also under the head of "St. Paul's Missionary Journeys." When our lessons fall in the Acts or the Epistles this summary will be found to be most helpful.

No one can rightly understand the New Testament who does not know something of the land, and of the people who dwelt there in the time of our Saviour. Only this week a teacher, otherwise quite intelligent, asked me who the Pharisees were? Among these "Helps" the teacher will find sections dealing with the Jewish sects and parties in the days of Christ. He will find a splendid article on the Geography and Topography of the Holy Land. Renan said that the Holy Land was the "Fifth Gospel," by which he meant that to rightly understand the Four Gospels, you must also understand the Holy Land itself. This can be done by any teacher who will carefully read the section on this to which we have referred above.

Among these "Helps," too, you will find the Botany of the Land, so described under the appropriate heads that you can easily get hold of the facts that you wish for.

The zoölogy of the Bible is dealt with, giving the birds, the quadrupeds, the fishes, the insects of the Bible lands.

When you study the Psalms you need to know what kind of musical instruments the Word speaks of, and these, too, you will find under their proper headings, with all that is known about them.

By this time (if you have been wise enough to read so far) you will begin to see that these "Helps" are really what they are called, and not merely notes to take up so many pages, and cost so much. This is what they are meant to be, and all who rightly use them will bear this same witness. For among them you find brief dissertations on the weights and measures of the Bible, and a long list of words that used to be good English, but which have become obsolete. These are explained, so that the reader may understand what he is reading. Then comes a "Glossary of Antiquities and Customs," where there is much that is rare and interesting to the teacher. All these are alphabetically arranged for the sake of convenience, so that it takes but a minute to find what you want.

Nearly all the Bible proper names have meanings, which are lost to us as they are given in our English Version. But these names are often important to the right understanding of the character of the one bearing the name. Jacob (for example) means nothing to the common reader, but as soon as you know that in Hebrew Jacob means "Supplanter," you see in his name the whole story of the way in which he supplanted his older brother Esau. This gives life and significance even to mere proper names in the Old and New Testaments. Of these names with their original significance, there are pages on pages in the "Helps."

And now we come to one of the most important of these "Helps." It is called "Subject Index to the Holy Scriptures." It covers over thirty pages. All the main themes that are dealt with in the Bible are here found under the appropriate headings. For example, suppose that you want to know what the Word of God has to say about the matter of Faith. You turn to that word, and there find that faith leads to salvation, and the references that show this. Then under various other headings

you see (in all cases with the proper reference) that "faith works by love," "faith produces peace," "faith overcometh the world," "faith is the shield of the Christian," and you have many examples given of how this faith helped men in Bible times to stand for the truth. All this is given in small compass, but so clearly that you can make no mistake as to what the Word has to say on this topic.

All members of Y. P. S. C. E. Societies might well come to this part of this Teachers' Bible for help in preparing for their meetings. These meetings would then be more to "edification" than they now are, for the power of any meeting is to be found in what it has to say of the teachings of the Word of God. The more we learn what God says about any theme, the more we stand on "bed-rock," and build ourselves up in our most holy faith.

I find that many teachers have no concordance. This is grievous, for how can they find texts that they need without this help? In my own work, I use the concordance all the time, and could not get along without it. As you are studying your lesson on Christ's injunction to "Search the Scriptures," you remember that somewhere the Word says, "The entrance of thy Word giveth light." But you cannot recall where that verse is. If you have a concordance, all that you need to do is to look up that verse and you will find it under the head "enter," and will see that it is to be found in the 119th Psalm. And so with any other passage that you may wish to find. Of course in such a condensed concordance as that in this Bible all the words cannot be given, but you will always be able under one or another of the prominent words of any text to find the book and chapter in which it occurs. This gives the teacher great help in finding Bible texts with which to uphold Bible truth.

No Bible teacher who is successful ever neglects his maps. He feels, and that rightly, that he must locate the places of which his lesson speaks. Otherwise he is teaching in the dark, and his scholars will suffer because of his ignorance. In this Bible you will find at the end a fine series of maps, well adapted to what you wish to do. There are fourteen of them. They give all the lands in which Bible events have taken place, and that in such way that you never need hunt long to find what you want. For there is an index to the maps, so that all you need to do is to look up in the index the name of the place for which you are hunting, and you will find it together with directions as to what map it is in, and in what part of that particular map. This makes the geographical part of your work very easy.

Yet after all that has been said above, I fear that some teachers will be like one of them who this week said to me, "If I buy this Bible, will it really be of use to me?" I confess that this question made me feel weak. It showed such a lack of intelligence that I was discouraged. Of course such a Bible as I have been speaking of will be of no use to the teacher who does not use it aright. It will not tell all that it knows, by merely holding it up to your ear. No book tells its own story. You must get that for yourself. To buy this Bible and not to *study* it is to waste money. There is not now, and there never has been and there never will be, any royal road to learning. You must *work* for what you get. There are some teachers who go to Conventions, and hear clever teachers, who think that those teachers came naturally, by a kind of inheritance, to their knowledge of matter and method. This is never true. All has been acquired by hard work on the part of the teacher. But the same road is open to all, and the poorest teacher may become a good teacher, *provided he will put work enough into it.* This Bible we have spoken above will not do anything by itself, but it will give the teacher in small compass all that he needs to become well acquainted with the book of which he is the official teacher. It is so small that he can carry it with him on his vacations, and thus save the carrying of several books, which is a great inconvenience. This is no small excellence. By and by he will learn to love the book with a kind of personal affection, and know it as he has never known any other copy of God's Word.

After all that has been said about this Bible, if it were to be had free, of course every one would send for it without delay. But it costs, and that will prevent many from buying. But really it does not cost so much as you might think. When I was a beginner in the Sunday-School work, a Bible much less useful than the one described cost $11.00; now you can buy the volume spoken of for various prices. It is really wonderful how they can put a book of its kind on the market so cheap, but they do. Note, all the editions have exactly the same material in them, but the type of some is smaller than that of others, and the binding and paper differ in quality. If my advice were asked, I should say, "By all means get the best binding and paper that you can possibly afford, and large type. Thus you will have a book that will last you for a lifetime."

Now what will you do about it? Will you simply read what has been said and "think" about the matter? Or will you at once buy the book and rejoice over your possession? I hope that it may be the latter.

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